

# MILITARY

ILLUSTRATED

PAST & PRESENT

No.68

JANUARY 1994

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*THE KNINJA FIGHTERS OF SERBIA  
GERONIMO GOES TO HOLLYWOOD  
CROATIAN WARRIOR 1918-45*

*1ST CANADIAN INFANTRY DIVISION  
ON SICILY, 1943*

*GEORGI KONSTANTINOVITCH ZHUKOV  
FRENCH IMPERIAL GUARD CARABINIER  
PRINZ EUGEN DIVISION 1943-45*

*LOFTIE'S BRITISH OFFICERS'  
UNIFORMS 1795-1814*



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## LANCASHIRE HUSSARS

I read with interest the article by Dr Bull on the early uniforms of the Lancashire Hussars (MI 64 & 65). Dr Bull gives the impression that the regiment consisted of three troops when in fact there were four. He correctly states that 'A' Troop was raised here in Ashton with 'B' Troop being formed in St Helens. The troop added in 1854 was formed in Liverpool but was disbanded in 1859, a new 'C' Troop being formed in Newton le Willows in the same year. In 1860 'D' Troop was raised in Ormskirk by Lord Skelmersdale.

Finally, I would like to disagree with Dr Bull for his dismissal of any link between the regiment and earlier volunteer units. Surely the fact that a regiment of Fencibles raised in 1798 and the Ashton Cavalry Troop in existence in 1804 were raised by the same family, from the population of the same small town, provides a very strong link indeed? To suggest otherwise is a disservice to both the Gerard family and the people of Ashton.

**Derek Barton,  
Ashton in Makerfield, Lancs**

## THIRD REICH

Mr Michael Jones' (and subsequent letters from other readers) objection to frequent articles on Nazi Germany and in particular the SS, seems to want to ignore the enormous impact caused by the twelve-odd years of the Nazi regime. Evil as it was, it happened and most people interested in military history will want to know every aspect of it.

I was a young soldier in Europe from soon after D-Day until 1947 but I had very little knowledge of the complexities of the Nazi war machine at that time or for some years after. Only when it became a subject of the media, and later more specialised publications such as 'MI', did I become more knowledgeable.

I too am a regular (two years) subscriber and I hope you will continue your present mix of articles including Nazi uniformed organisations in addition to all the other varied military subjects your report on so well.

**Peter E. Hilton, Battle,  
Sussex**

## CROATIAN WARRIOR

I came across a rather surprising use of the word 'Vlach' in a context where they are described as Serbs ('MI' 65). There seems to be little doubt that the people so designated are Serbs. Nevertheless, in all the Slav languages to the best of my knowledge and belief, the word 'Vlach' is used to describe Romance speakers. In Czech it refers to the Italians, as does the Polish 'Wloch'. In the Balkan peninsula proper it tends to be used about speakers of Romanian, and there are people outside Romania who speak a dialect of Romanian. Could this be a non-ethnic use of 'Vlach'; in other words, like Arnaut, Zouave or Uhlan?

**Dr D.G. Guild, Edinburgh**

## MODEL SOLDIERS

I have every issue of your excellent magazine from number one to date; the earlier issues took some desperate hunting for around the shows, but were well worth it.

The quality possessed by your magazine and not by the others on the market is the serious approach to uniform research and reconstruction. Full colour photographs of extant and reconstructed items are particularly appreciated, in any period. I am interested in model making and wargaming, and buy the appropriate magazines, but I do not want to see articles on these subjects appear in 'MI', preferring to use your magazine to expand my library of good quality primary and secondary source material. If you allow the nature of 'MI' to change, you will be entering into competition with many other magazines, and leaving vacant your own niche which you uniquely fill.

**C.M. Stannard,  
Hailsham, Sussex**

Having never felt strongly enough to write in to this column on other issues of controversy, I just had to on the inclusion of model soldier articles in 'MI'.

I fully support Geoff Barker of Oxford's view, not expecting 'MI' to devote major coverage to military modelling, but to show quality photos from the best of the shows in the world and from the best modellers. It certainly deserves some

mention as I imagine a large proportion of your readers are also modellers?

I can agree with Hugh Watkins of Stamford on one point only, that the detailed uniforms and reconstructions are bettered nowhere than in 'MI'. But he obviously does not realise the inspiration that we can gain from looking at well made and painted figures. They can also be a source of information as well; one only has to look at Bill Horan's models to see how soldiers must really have looked, AND be assured that the uniforms will have been fully researched.

Please don't bother to take up Mr Watkins' suggestion about museum dioramas. Unfortunately (and I stress it is only my opinion) the vast majority are very poor. As an alternative, may I suggest a short monthly feature article giving a detailed uniform breakdown of a popular model soldier, since many of the painting instructions supplied by the manufacturers tend to be vague (blue jacket, yellow facings, etc) without specifying exactly which shade. To see this sort of information in print would be most useful.

**Nick Latham,  
Newcastle-under-Lyne**

## ERRATA

In our November issue we inadvertently gave the BBC World Service Defence Correspondent's name as Marcus Ross. He is, of course, actually Jonathan Marcus. Thanks also to Researcher Tricia Makin and Producer Mike Popham.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## THE AUCTION SCENE

OCTOBER WAS A busy and mixed month for the auction houses and once again demonstrated the difficulty of predicting the market. Recently the well established rooms of Wallis and Wallis of Lewes sold the revolver that was used to kill the notorious outlaw Jesse James. The weapon itself, as an example of its type, was worth a couple of hundred pounds but its association meant that it sold for many thousands of pounds. As is

usual, this prompted owners with other associated guns to consider offering them for sale. In the October Connoisseur's sale at the same rooms a group of other associated Western items was offered. These included a Colt Navy percussion revolver owned by Jesse James, a Winchester rifle used by members of his gang and the Colt Single Action Army revolver that was used to murder the famous Wild Bill Hickock. They received

plenty of advance publicity and many confidently expected some very high prices. In the sale, to most peoples' surprise, not one was sold.

One can only speculate why and the reason could well be the sum result of several factors. All of the weapons seemed to be well authenticated, of vital importance with items such as these, but perhaps potential buyers were not entirely certain. The reserves may

have been too high or the potential purchasers just did not have the ready cash available. Perhaps Jesse James is more important than Hickock in the history of the West. What is the best course now for the vendor? This is difficult to decide for once an item has been seen all interested parties know at what figure it was withdrawn. This is presumably about the value that the market considered to be the right price and if it is offered again for sale it could well be that there will be little encouragement to go above this price. On the other hand somebody may feel that just a slightly bigger bid might get the piece. The other course is to leave the item off the market for a period before offering it again. The answer is entirely a matter of judgement and is never an easy one to decide. In the same sale a 1903 hunting carbine which belonged to Herman Göring sold for £4,000, reflecting the continued interest in Third Reich memorabilia.

The Connoisseur sale, as is now the established fashion, offered some prime lots of militaria and all illustrated in colour in the catalogue. Badges continue to hold and even increase their value and



**Left:** A rare helmet of the North Shropshire Yeomanry dating from about 1846 which was in good condition and sold in the same sale for £1,800. Yeomanry material, as a general rule, is less well collected than regular Army material. **Right:** An officer's helmet of the 7th (The Princess Royal's) Dragoon Guards. Although this piece was perhaps in slightly less good condition than the Yeomanry helmet it realised £2,400.



shoulder belt plates seem to be climbing the price ladder with £625 for an officer's of the 39th Regiment, and £500 for a silver NCO's from the 72nd Regiment. A helmet plate of the 1st Volunteer Battalion. The Leicestershire Regiment, hallmarked for 1884, sold at £450.

Uniforms were also well represented and sold well — a Colonel's full dress one of the 11th (Prince Albert's Own) Hussars made a very respectable £2,000. Headdress is always popular with collectors and there were plenty of good types at the sale. A unique example was the Home Service helmet of the founder of the Corps of Commissionaires which sold for £850. An officer's helmet of the 7th (The Princess Royal's) Dragoon Guards, pattern of 1834, with its impressive lion comb sold for £2,400 despite some minor faults. One of the prize pieces was the superb dress helmet of a Gentleman-at-Arms owned by Lieutenant Colonel H. Schofield, VC, with its fine white feather plume; not surprisingly this piece made a very good £3,200. There were a number of German pickelhaubes of various patterns and these all sold between £200 to £775 — the highest price being for that of an Officer of the Hesse Reserves.

Antique firearms were plentiful with some very good quality items and as always all sold well for there is little sign of this market slackening. Cased percussion revolvers were selling at around the £1,100 mark for a cased Adams with accessories. A cased Colt Pocket revolver sold at £1,550 and the growing interest in Classic pistol shooting was reflected in the £550 paid for a W.G. .450 revolver in its original leather case.

There were some very fine antique firearms offered by Christies at their sale on Wednesday 27 October which was a two part event with one section devoted to the collection of Wilfrid War, a well-known writer on antique firearms and a leader in the field of shooting sports. He rather specialised in cased sets and the 105 lots included some extremely fine sets. One of the outstanding was a pair of silver mounted flintlock duelling pistols by Durs Egg which were probably made for George III.

Phillips had a sale of model soldiers late in October and this is another field that seems to be fairly stable. The prices realised by some

*The first of many — this revolver was one of the first batch of percussion revolvers converted to centrefire in 1877 when the British Army was changing over to the new system. It was a Deane Adams percussion revolver before it was converted and issued to the 9th Lancers. It sold for £425.*

of the rarer pieces surprise those unconnected with the hobby but this is true of every collecting field. One of the most difficult jobs is trying to convince a non-collector that somebody's pride and joy really is worth the price they paid.

The next big sale was that at Sotheby's, Billingham, Sussex which was a four part sale spread over two days. On Saturday 27 November there was to have been a good selection of Aeronautica, a growing market with more and more collectors showing interest. Obviously the earlier material tends to be preferred but there is an expanding interest in World War II items, perhaps with a bias towards Battle of Britain material. On Tuesday 30 November the morning was to have been given over to medals, orders, arms, armour and militaria and in the afternoon sporting and vintage guns were on offer. The sale included a rather fine Imperial Russian cuirass and shako in addition to a lot of good general collectors' material, including a number of Third Reich car badges.

Both Weller and Duffy and Kent had pre-Christmas sales so that there was still time and opportunity for collectors to do their Christmas shopping.

**Frederick Wilkinson**

*A Pattern 1843 officer's helmet of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards which lacked its lining but still sold for £2,200 in Wallis and Wallis Connoisseur's sale.*



## ON THE SCREEN

### Video releases to buy

**Ben-Hur** (MGM/UA Home Video: PG)

**The Alamo** (MGM/UA Home Video: U)

**Doctor Zhivago** (MGM/UA Home Video: PG)

**The Great Escape** (MGM/UA Home Video: PG)

**The Battle of the Bulge** (Warner Home Video: PG)

MGM/UA HAVE released and are releasing films in special collector's editions, each presented in its correct screen ratio, and accompanied by the original cinema trailer. William Wyler's *Ben-Hur* [1959] is based on American Civil War General Lew Wallace's novel set at the time of Christ. Charlton Heston plays the Jewish aristocrat Judah Ben-Hur who becomes enemies with childhood friend Messala (Stephen Boyd), now in the Roman army. Messala imprisons Judah's mother and sister, and condemns Judah to the galleys, for the accidental death of a Roman officer.

Unlike the silent 1926 version, the sea battle between the Roman fleet and Macedonian pirates is recreated using miniatures. However, the climactic chariot race, which becomes a fight to the death between Judah and Messala, surpasses the original and is a most memorable sequence. The film won an unequalled eleven Oscars. The video includes the pre-credits overture.

John Wayne's *The Alamo* [1959] is the famous film concerning the siege of an old Spanish mission in 1836 during the Texas Revolution. Wayne, who also played Davy Crockett, invested much of his own personal fortune in realising his cherished ambition of bringing the story to the screen. The film was some 192 minutes long at the premiere, but adverse reviews prompted Wayne to cut some 25 minutes for general release. A subsequent reissue lost another 27. For many years it was considered that all full-length prints of the film were lost. However, just such a print was recently discovered in a Toronto warehouse. This is the version presented here, now with scenes never before seen in this country. These include a patrol from the Alamo being chased by Mexican lancers and dragoons, which results in the Texans' first casualties.

Colonel Travis (Lawrence Harvey) persuades courier James Bonham (Patrick Wayne) not to tell the defenders the truth about expected reinforcements, and he explains to Captain Dickinson (Ken Curtis) why he is superior to 'the rabble'. The video commendably includes the pre-credits overture, the intermission music and the exit music.

David Lean's *Doctor Zhivago* [1965] is based on Boris Pasternak's lengthy novel about a

Russian doctor/poet seen through the eyes of those with whom he interacts during the First World War, the Russian Revolution and the subsequent Civil War. Omar Sharif took the title role, Alec Guinness played a political commissar, Tom Courtney a revolutionary, while Julie Christie and Geraldine Chaplain played the women in his life. The film captures some of the scale and chaos of the times, but the brief war sequences are not fully developed. The video includes a short documentary about the making of the film called *Behind the Scenes with David Lean*, the overture and the intermission music.

John Sturges' *The Great Escape* [1963] concerns the mass escape from German PoW camp Stalag Luft III by 76 Allied airmen in March 1944. It is based on the book by Paul Brickhill, who was himself an inmate. The characters' names were changed and, in some cases, were an amalgam of more than one real personality. The stalwart British cast includes Richard Attenborough, James Donald, Donald Pleasance and Gordon Jackson. However, the more overtly virile roles were taken by American actors, such as Steve McQueen, James Garner, James Coburn and Charles Bronson.

Many of the incidents leading up to the escape were based on the book. The film departs more from reality in following the attempts to reach neutral countries, although McQueen's motorcycle stunts provide the film's most memorable moments. The infamous massacre of most of those recaptured is treated with restraint and the film, like the book, is dedicated to 'the fifty'. The appealing cast and Elmer Bernstein's jaunty march theme contribute to making this a most entertaining film. The story was remade for American television as *The Great Escape II* [1988], which also dealt with the post-war hunt for those responsible for the massacre (reviewed 'Mi' 23).

Warner Home Video have released a widescreen version of Ken Annakin's *Battle of the Bulge* [1965], about Hitler's desperate attempt to stem the Allied advance in December 1944 by a breakthrough in the Ardennes and the capture of Antwerp. Henry Fonda plays Lieutenant Colonel Kiley who alone predicts the impending German offensive while Robert Shaw plays fanatical Colonel Hessler, leading the Germans' 'armoured spearhead'. The cast also includes Robert Ryan, Charles Bronson, Dana Andrews, Telly Savalas, George Montgomery and James McArthur.

The considerable oversimplification of characters and events may aid comprehension by a general audience, but fails to convey the scale and complexity of the battle.



In particular, the British contribution is non-existent. Hessler's command appears to have been based on 1 SS Panzer Division. The siege of the Belgian town of Ambleve is presumably based on this unit's assaults on Spa, headquarters of the US First Army, and St Vith. However, the massacre of American prisoners, the use by the Germans of soldiers in American uniforms to disrupt communications, and General Anthony C. McAuliffe's legendary reply of 'Nuts' to an offer of surrender at

Bastogne are based on recorded events.

The first advance of the Tiger tanks (actually post-war American M-47s) through a forest in wintry conditions is effective. However, the climatic tank battle between the Tigers and Shermans (M-24 Chaffees) is shot on an open (Spanish) plain in broad daylight, counter to claims that bad weather is preventing air attacks. The climax of the Tigers being engulfed by blazing fuel from a vital fuel dump is based on an actual, but

relatively insignificant event. While fuel shortage was an important factor, it was the clearing weather which enabled the Allies to decisively capitalise on air superiority. Surprisingly, aircraft are almost totally absent from the film.

It was originally released in Cinerama and played some 163 minutes. The version on this video is a cut general release print. Among the scenes missing is an important sequence after the Germans have taken Ambleve, showing Hessler ordering a boy

sniper to be spared, but his father shot, followed by captured Major Wolenski (Charles Bronson) in discussion with Hessler. Warner Home Video claim that no complete master copies exist, but the version shown on ITV contains most of the missing scenes. Director Ken Annakin fails to achieve the realism of his British sequences in *The Longest Day* (1962), but the film remains one of Hollywood's most spectacular forays into World War II.

Stephen J. Greenhill

## PROFILE

# French Imperial Guard Carabinier, 1866

DICK FISCHER Painting by VELIMIR VUKSIC

THIS IS THE first of twelve specially commissioned portraits of soldiers from a variety of nationalities and periods from mediaeval times to the 20th century. Each article will also examine the evolution of the particular martial type shown.

THE 1856 PEACE of Paris which ended the Crimean War (1854-1855) created some new problems, particularly with regard to the European powers' relationship toward Turkey. France's policy was to cool relations with Austria and move closer to Russia and Piedmont. So, with French support, it did not take much to encourage Piedmont to go to war against Austria in 1859. Soon Napoleon III marched onto Italian soil with 180,000 men, defeating the Austrians in bloody battles at Magenta and Solferino and forcing them to accept unfavorable peace terms. These victories in Italy were compared with their earlier great victories at Austerlitz (1805) and Wagram (1809). Once again at the pinnacle of power after Napoleon I, the French army was considered the model of a modern army, with many foreign military missions visiting Paris and its uniforms copied around the world.

In the course of the 1865 reorganisation of the French army, two regiments of *Carabiniers* were cut. This move was greeted with great criticism by a public intoxicated by the renewed rise of France's military. Large circulation newspapers and well-known political and cultural dignitaries sought for the *Carabiniers* to be reinstated. There was so much pressure on Napoleon III that, in November 1865, he ordered one of two Guard Cuirassier regiments be reformed as the Imperial Guard *Carabiniers*. The familiar breastplates and helmets, symbols of a whole epoch, were pulled out of storage and the regiment was solemnly lined up and reviewed by the Emperor himself.

Just as the name 'hussars' is traditionally tied to Hungary, and 'uhlans' with Austria, in the same way the *Carabiniers* surfaced in France at the begin-

nings of the era of modern cavalry. In 1679, Louis XIV, the 'sun king' (1643-1715), ordered that the two best marksmen in each cavalry troop of his line cavalry regiments be given an *arme carabiné* — a short and very precise musket. In battle the target of these sharpshooters, who were called *carabiniers*, was the enemy officers, supporting their cavalry with long distance fire. In 1693 Louis decided to formally gather all the *Carabiniers* into one regiment, which he called the *Royal Carabiniers*. The *Royal Carabiniers* consisted of five brigades of two squadrons of four companies, with each company comprised of 40 men — or about 1,600 *Carabiniers* altogether.

In 1758 the Count of Provenca became the commander of the *carabiniers*, which were then called *Corps Carabiniers de Monsieur* and received the number 19 in the regular army ranks. In the rest of the cavalry each company of a line regiment had one *carabinier*, while the dragoons each had four. In 1788, two regiments were formed of the 1,200 *carabiniers*.

The French *Carabiniers* reached the pinnacle of their career during the time of the Napoleonic Wars, especially under the command of Baron Aimable Guy Blancard (1774-1853), Colonel of the 2nd Regiment from 1807, and General of the *Carabinier* Brigade from 1815. Unfortunately for the history of the regiment, in the Battle of Waterloo one officer of the 2nd

*Carabiniers* deserted and revealed to the British the plan for the final attack of the Imperial Guard.

After the fall of Napoleon in 1815 only one regiment was assembled, again named the *Carabiniers de Monsieur*, with a second regiment raised up in 1825. In 1831 the *Carabiniers* exchanged their traditional white uniforms for light blue. It is interesting to note here that the chief inspector of the French cavalry between 1835 and 1848 was Lieutenant-General Blancard. In the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) the *Carabiniers* were reformed into the 11th Cuirassiers.

In the course of Napoleon's reforms of 1803-1804, when the French Revolutionary Army became *Grande Armée*, the heavy cavalry were organised into the 1st and 2nd Senior regiments of *Carabiniers* and twelve line cuirassier regiments. Even though the *Carabiniers* were a part of the heavy cavalry, and in battles lined up among the cuirassiers, they were differentiated from them both by their lack of armour, as well as the characteristic bearskin, instead of helmet, that they wore. The *carabiniers'* privilege, like the *Guard Grenadiers à Cheval*, was their black horses.

In 1810 Napoleon decided to outfit his *Carabiniers* with brass breastplates and a special helmet, which, the malicious claimed, was but a copy of the helmet of the Russian cuirassiers. In fact, by 1798 the Austrians had outfitted their heavy cavalry and line infantry

with a helmet crest known as 'cheville'. This was the example the Russians followed when they gave their cuirassiers and dragoons similar helmets, but with a taller and fuller crest.

The similarity with the French helmets, however, was only in the crest. The French helmets were of the classic style, very similar to those worn by the ancient Greek hoplites. Classicism emerged in France as an artistic direction during the late 18th century, finding its fullest expression in painting, sculpture and architecture. It was modelled on the art of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as on the concept of a free citizenry from the French Revolution.

Even though the French outfitted their cavalry with headresses from 'antiquity' in 1810, that type of helmet did not receive its name — the Minerva helmet — until 1840. Carlo Alberto, the King of Piedmont, ordered the design of the new headress for his cavalry from his court painter Palagio Palagi. (To entrust a painter with the design of a helmet speaks plenty about how significant was not only the function but also the beauty of the soldier's dress, particularly at a time when the cavalry was at the height of its extravagance.) Palagio took as his model the helmet of the ancient goddess Minerva, from which came its name. By the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, however, European cavalries had adopted a new, smaller type of helmet dominated by intricate, artistic metalwork instead of a luxurious crest. Although their helmets were already a thing of the past by the time that the *Carabiniers* were first cut, because tradition was stronger than fashion, it was nevertheless in Minerva helmets that they marched into the Franco-Prussian War. **M1**





## Geronimo!

## Hollywood Goes Native

Under the working title of 'War Cry', Miguel Inclan charged across the screen as the fierce Apache medicine man. The picture would be released in 1951 as *Indian Uprising*.

OVER THE CENTURIES, the people now commonly called the Apache adapted to their harsh environment and became rooted in the American south-west. Independent and free, these Native Americans often had to fight to retain their way of life. In the process, they came to be viewed as a blood-thirsty group who had to be subdued by the whites.

This attitude existed in early fictional literature and other popular art forms. One figure emerged from many of these make believe renditions and became synonymous with the stereotype of the treacherous

Dr JOHN P. LANGELLIER

PERHAPS A NEW feature film and made for television movie will redress the sad treatment the famous Apache leader Geronimo has suffered at the hands of Hollywood. Here we review his various wide screen and TV appearances since 1912.

savage. This was the Goy-ah-kla (One Who Yawns), better known by the name he was given in Mexico — Geronimo. Starting with novelist Edward Ellis' 1901 *On the Trail of Geronimo*, this shaman and leader would become a key figure in several of more than 150 novels which treated the Apache wars.

Many motion pictures included the legendary Apache too. As early as 1912 the now lost nitrate film, *Geronimo's Last Raid*, appeared; indeed,

just a few years after the death of the title character at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in 1909. This picture probably painted the medicine man-warrior and his fellow Apaches in unflattering hues. Assuredly more than a quarter of a century later, John Ford's fleeting presentation of Chief White Horse as Geronimo, in the 1939 epic *Stagecoach*, offered an uncomplimentary rendering of Geronimo's band. Bent on murder and rapine, the menacing villains stalk the stage to

Lordsburg, only to be driven off at the last moment by a cavalry charge to the rescue.

By the following year, Paramount used Geronimo's name to sell one of its pictures. The 1940 *Geronimo* featured Chief Thunder Cloud, but he received minor billing. According to a 1940 *New York Times* review, Thunder Clouds' lines consisted of 'a vocabulary of one grunt and a histrionic repertoire of two expressions: grim and very grim'.

Geronimo fared little better in *Valley of the Sun*, RKO's 1942 vehicle in which Tom Tyler played the part opposite the unlikely team of Lucille Ball and Sir Cedric Hardwicke. The plot revolved around an undercover government man who sets out to trap the proverbial dishonest Indian agent.

A wicked Indian agent likewise formed a key plot element in the 1948 entry to John Ford's cavalry trilogy, *Fort Apache*. At a conference where the double-dealing agent is present with Cochise, Geronimo is introduced with some ceremony by the translator, but he only peers stoically at the whites without uttering a word.

By 1950, Geronimo, this time with Jay Silverheels doing the honours, provided a foil for Jeff Chandler, the latter actor being cast as Cochise in *Broken Arrow*. Silverheels' brief role characterised the cinematic cliché of the 'bad Indian' who refuses to accept the road of peace and 'civilization' offered

Jay Silverheels and Audie Murphy squared off as Geronimo and John Clum in the 1956 Universal film, *Walk the Proud Land*.



by the white man. Conversely, Chandler is the 'good Indian' who sees the wisdom of co-existence and co-operation.

Also in 1950, the small production company of Eagle Lion offered *I Killed Geronimo*. For a second time Chief Thundercloud assumed Geronimo's mantle. In this later instance he faced a US Army officer (James Ellison) in hand-to-hand combat. The bluecoat won and peace came to the border.

Despite Geronimo's demise in this feature, the next Western, in this case Paramount's 1951 *The Last Outpost*, managed to resurrect the Apache so that he could besiege a lonely frontier outpost held by Union forces. The surrounded fort's fate rests in the hands of a band of noble Confederates led by their gentlemanly commander, a part similar to several others played by the then B-movie actor, Ronald Reagan.

Another 1951 feature, *Indian Uprising*, did little to enhance Geronimo's image, or for that matter allow the actor who portrayed him, Miguel Inclan (who was Cochise in *Fort Apache*), to breathe life into his character. The same statement could be made about a pair of 1952 westerns, *The Battle of Apache Pass* and *Son of Geronimo*, with Jay Silverheels and Chief Yowlachie respectively assuming the astute Apache's identity. In the former title Jeff Chandler reprised his performance as Cochise and worked together with an army officer to halt the rebellious Geronimo. In turn, the 15-episode serial, *Son of Geronimo*, pitted Clayton Moore in his pre-Lone Ranger days, against a warrior claiming to be Geronimo's offspring.

Decedents of famous Apaches continued to appear into 1953 with *Taza Son of Cochise*. For the third time the audience was expected to believe Jeff Chandler's rendition of Cochise while Ian MacDonald was unconvincing as Geronimo.

Now becoming a regular part of Westerns, Geronimo, in the person of Monte Blue, had been added as a recognisable name to Burt Lancaster's Apache, a 1954 United Artist's



release. Blue turned in a credible performance, albeit a brief one, while Lancaster starred as a warrior who escapes from the train bearing him away to imprisonment in Florida.

Two years passed before Geronimo returned to the screen, again in the person of Jay Silverheels, while Audie Murphy was John Clum in the 1956 film *Walk the Proud Land*. Clum, the only man to capture Geronimo (in all other instances he surrendered), was the main character, not Geronimo.

In 1962, it appeared that the famed Apache finally might have his day in court, when Chuck Connors signed on for *Geronimo*. The popularity of *The Rifleman* series may account for this contract, but Connors' selection reflected an insensitive attitude about

selecting Indians to play major roles in films. Unfortunate casting and a weak script meant that Geronimo's true tale remained untold.

Television was no better when it came to this shortcoming, with non-Indian actors being selected including Charles Stevens, in the early 1950s for *The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin*, and Mike Mazurki as a caricature of Geronimo in *F-Troop* during the 1960s. Even Disney followed the trend when Pat Hogan donned a wig for the part in one of the episodes of the 1960 'Texas John Slaughter' series titled *Geronimo's Revenge*. Later, Enrique Lucero was a fourth TV facsimile of Geronimo in *Mr. Horn*, a 1979 ABC vehicle for David Carradine.

More than a decade passed

before Geronimo returned to the screen, once more on television in 1990, facing General Nelson Miles (Hugh O'Brian) and Dodge City's make-believe former marshal, Matt Dillon (James Arness). The inclusion of Geronimo in this show, *Gunslinger 2: The Last Apache*, again indicated that Geronimo remained recognisable to a broad public as one of a litany of Western notables.

That fact was not overlooked when several television documentaries recently 'rediscovered' the West and presented Geronimo in the cast of stock characters. As early as 1988, PBS offered *Geronimo and the Apache Resistance* while A&E gave its 1993 version on an episode of *Legends of the West* with host Kenny Rogers. In the process, Geronimo's image



Jay Silverheels (right) would play Geronimo on more than one occasion, including the 1950 *Broken Arrow*, starring James Stewart and Jeff Chandler.



changed from fierce fiend to freedom fighter.

This revisionist slant carried over in the screenplay for Columbia's 1993 *Geronimo*, directed by Walter Hill. The story, based loosely on Third Cavalry officer Britton Davis' autobiography, *The Truth About Geronimo*, concentrates on the final 1885-86 pursuit of Geronimo's band, although other early incidents of the Apache campaigns are intermixed in the plot. Actual events, however, serve as the backdrop to the growth of a fictional friendship between Geronimo and one of the military men who doggedly trails him, Lieutenant Charles Gatewood. Wes Studi, from *Dances with Wolves* and *The Last of the Mohicans*, is Geronimo and Jason Patric portrays Gatewood. Two distinguishing aspects of this picture are the use of the Apache language with subtitles and the casting of a Native American as Geronimo after so many instances of non-Indians taking the part. These positive aspects and the considerable attention to detail as far as costumes, props and set design are concerned, indicate considerable improve-

ments over past productions. Nevertheless, the picture is no history lesson. This rendition is a blood and guts duel between Geronimo and the military might of the United States. Entertainment then, not education or a better understanding of Geronimo, is the result.

To some degree, a script by J.T. Allen for a 1993 TNT movie represents a more accurate attempt to capture elements of Geronimo's life. Although this is the case, there are many elements which add to the legend rather than provide historical insights into this complex figure. Additionally, a certain amount of politically correct elements at the expense of facts has caused some individuals to nickname the production 'Dances With Coyotes'.

With the new feature film and the made-for-television movie, as well as recent TV documentaries, Goy-ah-kla now seems to enjoy greater notoriety than ever. Despite this heightened exposure, popular presentations have failed to capture this complex Apache and his times. Perhaps the truth about Geronimo never will be depicted and the legend will continue to eclipse the man. **MI**

Lieutenant Charles Gatewood (Jason Patric) and Geronimo (Wes Studi) in the new Columbia film.





# The 1st Canadian Infantry Division, 1943

ON THE AFTERNOON of 23 April 1943, Lieutenant General A.G.L. McNaughton, GOC First Canadian Army, was called to the War Office by General Sir Alan Brooke, CIGS, and told — '...A decision has been reached by The War Cabinet to undertake certain operations based on Tunisia. The Prime Minister has instructed me to enquire whether you will agree to Canadian forces participating, to the extent of one Canadian infantry division and one tank brigade, together with the necessary auxiliary troops...'

Within 48 hours the Canadian Government authorised General McNaughton to undertake the operation in question and detailed the 1st Canadian Infantry Division and the 1st Canadian Army Tank Brigade, with certain auxiliary units, for this task. Eleven weeks later Canadian soldiers landed on the beaches of Sicily as the allies opened the assault in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

The real war had been long in coming to the 1st Canadian Infantry Division. So far, land operations had been brief and bloodless affairs, like Kiska and Spitzbergen, or short and deadly, like Dieppe or Hong Kong. But Sicily, which marked the beginning of a continuous land battle in Europe, did not start until 3½ years after mobilisation.

## Canadian Mobilisation

With war between Germany and the Commonwealth becoming obvious, mobilisation of the Canadian Active Service Force was ordered for 1 September 1939. Discussions with the British government on the immediate requirements for manpower and equipment were opened and it was decided that the Active Force would consist of two infantry divisions and an assortment of specialised auxiliary units. On 16 September it was announced that the 1st Canadian Infantry Division would be sent to England as soon as possible.

Unlike 1914, when the 1st Contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force was mobilised in a single camp, specific militia regiments were ordered to raise an active battalion at local headquarters. Most officers and NCOs were supplied from existing militia units, but all active units

## JACK L. SUMMERS Painting by RON VOLSTAD

THE 1st CANADIAN Infantry Division moved to England in 1940 but would have a long wait before first seeing action on Sicily in 1943. In this first of two articles we examine its composition, equipment and dress, and operations up to the fall of Agira.



*A battalion of 1st Canadian Infantry Division being inspected by Major General G.G. Simonds in England in June 1943. The men are in 'drill order' but the FS sidecap would be replaced by the khaki beret before the end of the year.*

including those of the Permanent Force, required the enlistment of a substantial number of recruits to bring them up to wartime strength.<sup>2</sup>

The brigades of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division were raised geographically with 1st Brigade from Ontario, 2nd Brigade from Western Canada and 3rd Brigade from Quebec and the Maritimes. A regular infantry battalion was assigned to each brigade of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division. The composition of the 1st Canadian Division was as follows:

**1st Canadian Infantry Brigade:** The Royal Canadian Regiment, London, Ont; The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, Belleville, Ont; and The 48th Highlanders of Canada, Toronto, Ont. **2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade:** The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry,

Calgary, Alta; The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, Vancouver, B.C.; and The Edmonton Regiment, Edmonton, Alta. **3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade:** The Royal 22e Regiment, Quebec; The Carleton and York Regiment, St John, N.B.; and The West Nova Scotia Regiment, Aldershot, N.S. Three machine-gun battalions, The Saskatoon Light Infantry (MG), The Toronto Scottish (MG), and the Royal Montreal Regiment (MG), were mobilised for the 1st Canadian Infantry Division. The appropriate units of divisional artillery, engineers, service corps, and medical corps also were mobilised bringing the 1st Canadian Infantry Division up to a strength of some 23,000 men.

Units of the 1st Canadian Division moved directly from their mobilisation sites to Halifax where they boarded ship and sailed for England in one of three 'flights' on 10 and 22 December 1939 and 30 January 1940. 1st Canadian Division was to concentrate in the Aldershot area, complete training and equipping, and then move to France as part of the British Expeditionary force. The 2nd Canadian Infantry Division was to follow as soon as possible to form a Canadian

Corps.

## The long wait

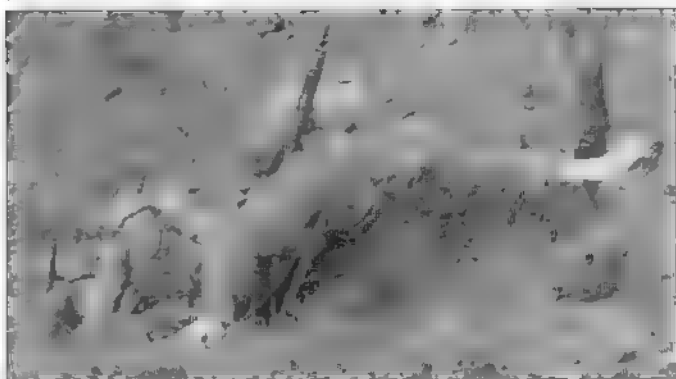
Concentrated in the Aldershot area, 1st Canadian Infantry Division trained hard to become part of IV British Corps which was to join the BEF in France in the late summer of 1940. However, these plans were rudely shattered, first by the German invasion of Denmark and Norway, and then by the Battle of France in May-June 1940 which sent the BEF reeling back from Dunkirk to England with only their uniforms and personal weapons.

Plans for the operational development of the Canadian Army were based on First World War experience when Canadian formations were sent to France to become part of the BEF. But with France now out of the war, Canada was determined to strengthen the defence of Britain until the troops were required elsewhere. The Canadian Army programme for the build-up of a force in Britain called for a Canadian Corps of three infantry divisions to be completed by early spring 1941 and to be joined by an armoured Brigade Group as soon as possible thereafter.

While the BEF was fighting its way out of France through the port of Dunkirk, several tasks were proposed for the Canadians, none of which were carried out. However, on 11 June, a second BEF under the command of General Alan Brooke was organised and sent back to France through the port of Brest. The 1st Canadian Infantry Division was assigned to this force, but only 1st Brigade landed and moved up to its assembly area, only to be turned around and sent back to Aldershot. The Battle of France had ended.

The Canadians, both the 1st Canadian Infantry Division and auxiliary formations, were given the counter-attack role of GHQ Reserve Troops and were formed into Brigade and Battalion Groups for this purpose. In the spring of 1941 there was some likelihood of the invasion of Britain as England faced Germany and Italy alone, a situation which produced some exciting possibilities. However, on 22 June 1941, Germany attacked Russia after Greece, Yugoslavia and Crete, and while a German invasion of Britain was still pos-





Canadian infantry training in hill climbing in Scotland

sible, it was most unlikely. In the autumn of 1941 the Canadians moved from the mobile defence task to a static defence position on the Sussex coast.

By 1942 the invasion of Britain was no longer a serious threat. It was also apparent that the cross-channel operation for the invasion of France and Europe would not take place until the following year at the earliest. However, a major operation was planned for late 1942. This was operation 'Torch', the landing of British and American troops on the coast of French North Africa. The Canadians were not invited to take part in this operation nor in its planning.

As the Tunisian battles moved steadily to a close, additional planning was required for the next phase of operation. This was the Casablanca Conference held in late January 1943 where it was decided that the next operational move would be the invasion of Sicily, probably in July 1943.

Because of the limited facilities of the Middle East ports, it was necessary to draw one infantry division was selected for this task. In the original plan, Canada was not included in this operation. In fact, Canada was not even represented at the Casablanca Conference but received its first information on this meeting through direct correspondence to Mr King from Mr Churchill. However, by this time public opinion in Canada and opinion within the services considered it time for Canadians to take an active part in the impending military operations. An appeal for such action was made directly to Mr Churchill and Canada's request for participation in the battle was granted.

#### Organisation

The 1st Canadian Infantry Division assigned to take part in the invasion of Sicily was slightly different from the infantry division mobilised in

light anti-aircraft guns, and by the development of an infantry reconnaissance regiment — a unit of four squadrons each with three troops of armoured cars, scout cars, and assault troops of riflemen in half-tracks.

The Divisional Machine-Gun Battalion, a unit of four MMG companies, each of three platoons of four Vickers .303 MMGs in Bren carriers, went through a number of changes. In May 1943 the machine-gun

light anti-aircraft guns. The Saskatoon Light Infantry (MG) was converted to the 1st Canadian Division Support Battalion.

#### Weapons and equipment

The infantry battalion achieved its effect by driving the enemy away with overwhelming firepower and occupying the vital ground with its soldiers. To perform this task, three major groups of weapons were carried within the battalion. These were: personal weapons, battalion weapons and special weapons.

Personal weapons were those weapons issued to and carried by a specific soldier which enabled him to protect himself at all times, and also help increase the volume of firepower. Personal weapons of the Canadian infantryman in 1943 were: No 4, .303 Lee Enfield rifle, with spike bayonet; .45 Thompson sub-machine-gun, or 9mm sten sub-machine carbine. (Units going to the Mediterranean or Middle East were issued with the Thompson sub-machine-gun while those designed for north-west Europe carried the 9mm Sten sub-machine carbine. Units of 1st Canadian Infantry Division on the way to Sicily were issued with the .45 Thompson sub-machine gun and .38 Smith & Wesson or Webley revolver. (Early in the war, officers were expected to provide their own personal weapons, and many of these were .45 Colt revolvers. As the war progressed, the .38

Bren Gun Carrier Mk 1, a lightly armoured tracked vehicle not designed to fight as an AFV but to increase the volume of supporting fire by carrying weapons quickly to ground positions.



Vickers .303-inch medium machine-gun mounted on a Bren Gun Carrier. The Canadian Army was still using this weapon during the Korean War

September 1939. The infantry battalion, the basic fighting unit, remained much the same. It was made up of four rifle companies, each of three platoons, and a support company consisting of a mortar platoon with six 3-inch mortars, an anti-tank platoon of six 6-pdr anti-tank guns, a carrier platoon of 13 carriers, and an assault pioneer platoon.

Most battalions created an ad hoc scouts and snipers platoon by drafting suitable men from the rifle companies. The platoon commander reported directly to the commanding officer and provided him with a personal reconnaissance unit.

Experience from the Battle of France indicated a requirement for effective close reconnaissance and an increased capacity for local protection from low-flying aircraft. These deficiencies were met by the addition of a light anti-aircraft artillery regiment armed with 40mm Bofors

battalion was designated the Divisional Support Battalion and organised into three Brigade Support Groups. Each group was made up of a Machine-Gun Company of twelve .303 Vickers medium machine-guns, a Mortar Company of eight 4.2-inch mortars, and an anti-aircraft company of 20mm Oerlikon





revolver was replaced by the 9mm automatic pistol, but this change did not take place until late 1944, and Canadians going to the Mediterranean in 1943 were issued with .38 revolvers.

Platoon weapons were issued to each platoon and operated by a team of soldiers. Their purpose was to increase the volume of fire, like the LMG, or to perform a special function such as the provision of light but mobile anti-tank protection. The common infantry platoon weapons of 1943 were: Bren LMG — issued on the basis of one gun for each section or three for the platoon. This was the major fire-power producing weapon of the infantry. The Bren was introduced before 1939 and its use in the infantry section was the basis of 1939/45 infantry tactics.

Mortar, 2-inch — carried on the basis of one mortar for each platoon and used for bringing down plunging fire on enemy slit trenches and also for laying down protective smoke screens on the platoon.

PIAT (Projector, infantry, anti-tank) — introduced early in 1943 to provide the infantry platoon with a mobile anti-tank weapon). It consisted of a 32 lb launcher which projected a 2½lb bomb with a shaped charge at a range of less than 100 yards. Weapons experts considered the PIAT probably the most unusual standard-issue weapon employed by the Commonwealth forces.

Grenades — hand-thrown bombs of various types to meet

close combat situations, were mostly introduced after 1939. The No 36, or fragmentation grenader, broke into dozens of steel pieces on explosion and was useful for cleaning infantry soldiers from slit trenches and rooms in houses. The No 77, or phosphorous grenade, creates a small but thick smoke screen to cover troop movements. The No 25, or Hawkins Anti-tank grenade was a light 11lb charge in a tinned plate rectangle. It could be used as a small anti-



*The Scouts and Snipers Platoon was an ad hoc sub-unit of the Support Company consisting of 30 other ranks and at least ten horses or mules.*



*The 2-inch mortar described in the text*

tank mine, thrown under the track of a tank, or pulled across a road or track on a string to form an anti-tank obstacle. The mine also could be used as an explosive charge to blow in walls of buildings.

Battalion heavy weapons. Several groups of heavy weapons were allotted to the battalion and assigned their

tasks during the battle by Headquarters. Among these were 3-inch mortars, firing a 10lb bomb at a high angle and high speed. There are six of these mortars in carriers in the support company. Being right with the battalion, these weapons could come into action at once to consolidate the objective and to break up the enemy's counter attack.

The 6-pdr anti-tank gun played a similar role in protecting the objective from counter-attack by tanks. There were six of these guns, towed by carriers, which could form a substantial anti-tank defensive position.

Divisional support group weapons. The search for additional mobile firepower at the brigade and battalion level continued, and the 4.2-inch mortar, .303 Vickers medium machine-gun, and the 20mm Oerlikon light anti-aircraft cannon were selected to provide an increase in firepower, and were grouped into a special unit, the Division Support

Battalion.

The Divisional Support Battalion was organised into three brigade support groups which enabled a specific group to be placed in support of a designated infantry brigade. Each group consisted of a medium machine-gun company of three platoons of four guns each, a 4.2-inch mortar company of two platoons of four mortars each, and a Light AA Company of four platoons of four 20mm Oerlikon Light AA Canon each.

#### **Dress and accoutrements**

The troops 1st Canadian Infantry Division sailed from Scotland late in June wearing standard battle dress from which unit and divisional insignia had been removed, and with no idea of their destination. But three days later the transports turned south and entered warmer waters. All ranks assembled in the dining room and the ships' bags were brought out of the hold. There were messages of welcome from various commanders, with that from Montgomery of particular interest. There were maps and models indicating the destination of Sicily and bales of tropical uniforms were opened and issued while the woollen battledress went into unit storage where it remained until the Italian winter chilled the troops to the bone.

Tropical dress consisted of British pattern cotton bush shirts and shorts with hose tops and short puttees. The forage cap remained the khaki field service cap. The khaki beret had begun to appear as the universal service cap for Canadian infantry, and a few troops, usually recent reinforcements, wore them in Sicily, but a general issue of khaki berets had not been made to the 1st Canadian Infantry Division. Long trousers of khaki drill were

*Infantry personal weapons, visible are No 4 SMLE rifles, Thompson sub-machine-gun, .38 Smith and Wesson revolver and Bren Gun*





available for those bothered by sunburn or mosquitoes.

The troops were equipped with Pattern 1937 Web Equipment with most infantrymen in standard battle order or in fighting order. Unit transport was reduced to an absolute minimum so personal requirements for the next several weeks had to be carried by the soldier. Most soldiers came ashore with a well-loaded small pack, but once the searing sicilian heat and rugged terrain were encountered, all but the most essential items of kit were discarded. Somehow the small pack was transferred to unit transport and accoutrements were scaled down to fighting order which consisted of waistbelt, braces, pouches, water bottle, and mess tins carried in a square waterbottle carrier. Personal kit was rolled in the gas cape which was fastened to the back of the waistbelt. Fighting order soon became the universal order of equipment when in contact with the enemy.<sup>3</sup>

Most troops wore the British pattern Steel helmet, Mk11, although many carrier drivers were issued with the brimless helmet, RAC Pattern. These helmets closely resembled the brimless helmets of the German paratrooper who soon became consistent opponents of the Canadians, and many of the helmets, RAC, were discarded to prevent cases of mistaken identity.

#### Planning and training

The invasion of Sicily required the Canadians in England to sail to the Mediterranean and join the main force from North Africa. Planning the movements of the main force took place in Cairo while the Canadians set up A planning HQ in London on 24 April 1943. As soon as the Canadians were assigned to the Sicily operation, an urgent request was received for Major General Salmon, GOC 1st Canadian Division, and certain members of his staff, to come to Cairo to consult with officers of the senior formation. On 29 April the GOC and his planning party took off for Cairo but before the aircraft cleared the coast of England, it crashed killing all members of the party. Without delay, General McNaughton ordered Major General G.G. Simonds to assume command of 1st Canadian Division and fly to Cairo to resume the planning for the invasion of Sicily.

While planning in Cairo proceeded at a frantic pace, the soldiers of 1st Canadian Division assembled in the train-

ing areas of Scotland to practice the basic techniques of assault landing, and also to undertake a period of mountain training in the hills of Perthshire. Units were brought up to wartime strength by drafting reinforcements from other Canadian formations. They received their full scale of equipment, and in some cases such as the Support Groups with the 4.2-inch mortar, went on crash courses to learn how to use it. Vehicles were waterproofed and camouflaged and the troops still had time for five days' leave.

The Canadian plan required 26,000 troops to sail over 2,000 miles from England to Sicily to make an assault landing beside a designated British divisions now training on the shores of the Red Sea. To carry out the assault landings successfully, the 125 vessels loaded with Canadians were organised into four major convoys, each travelling at its own speed, so they would arrive at the right place at the right time.

The Canadian forces consisted of: The 'Fast assault convoy', carrying the bulk of the assault troops, leaving at D-12 and proceeding at 12 knots; the 'Slow Assault Convoy', made up of the bulk of the transport and stores required to support the first attack. Most of these ships sailed on D-12. And finally there were two 'follow-up convoys', carrying the Army Tank Brigade, less 12 Army Tank Regiment, and several other units not required for the major assault.

On 1 July the last convoy left for the Mediterranean and the assault troops of the 'Fast Assault Convoy', now well out to sea, opened the information packages of orders, maps, models, and photographs, and learned their destination was Sicily.

Early on 5 July, the 'Fast Assault Convoy' turned eastward, passed the Strait of Gibraltar, and entered the Mediterranean. The 'Slow Assault Convoy' ran into trouble on the night of 4-5 July when two of its vessels were torpedoed and on the next afternoon lost a third ship. Fifty-two Canadians were lost while some 500 vehicles and 40 guns went down with the ships. This created some difficulties later in the assault phase of the operation.

#### Assault landing

General Montgomery planned two major assault landings on the south-east tip of the island. Lieutenant General Dempsey was to put XIII Corps on the right hand beach, while XXX

Corps, including 1st Canadian Infantry Division, was to take the left beach. The Canadians were to assault the extreme left end of their beach with Pachino airfield as the objective.

On the afternoon before the landing, a sharp gale suddenly blew up producing such a rough sea that postponement of the landing was threatened. However, by sunset the sea subsided to a heavy swell and landings began on time. But there were some faults in the landings, some of which may have been the result of the navy's attitude. The navy was responsible for getting troops from the ships to the correct section of the beach. One of the naval commanders advised Major Howard Mitchell of the Saskatoon L.I. to stop soldiers on shore to fight Italians, and precisely where this confrontation occurred was of little importance! Small wonder there was the occasional near miss.

At 06:45, 10 July, Major General Simonds reported the Canadians had captured all initial objectives. By the first night, Phase II of operations was completed. It had been a highly satisfactory day. Casualties were surprisingly light with more than 700 Italians taken prisoner.

On 11 July, 1st Canadian Division began to drive inland from the extreme south-east to the north-west. The weather was hot, the roads dusty, and there was little transport. The troops were fresh from a temperate climate and long voyage and even mere marching was an exhausting experience. Montgomery pulled the Division out for a rest in the Giarratana area.

The 1st Canadian Division resumed its advance on the night of 14-15 July upon the network of road communications within the area Leonforte-Enna where the majority of towns and villages perched on hilltops. The next day, 15 July, saw the first encounter of the Canadians with the Germans when troops of 1st Brigade and tanks of Three Rivers Regiment ran into a rear guard of the Hermann Göring Division and were forced to flank them at increasing cost in casualties.

Driving westwards, the Canadians occupied Caltagirone on 16 July, and the next day Piazza Armerina. On 18 July, after a day of hard and confused fighting, Valguarnera finally fell into the hands of the Canadians. The next day the Canadians were directed against the lofty towns of

Ronald Volstad's reconstructions show types of 1st Canadian Infantry Division assembled and moving to Sicily. A Bren gunner of the Edmonton Regiment in battledress and battle order. This regiment assembled in Scotland prior to embarkation to practise assault landing techniques and to undertake a period of mountain training. The troops of the 1st Infantry Division sailed from Scotland late in June, with the regimental and divisional insignia removed from their battledress. B When well out to sea, the convoy turned south and battledress was stowed away in the personal kit bags, to be replaced with British tropical bush kit. This consisted of a tropical drill bush jacket worn inside or outside, cotton drill shorts with socks, ammunition boots, and short puttees. The figure illustrated is a corporal of the R 22eR, armed with a standard No 4 SMLE rifle and wearing a steel helmet Mk II with helmet cover and shell dressing.

Leonforte and Assoro which crowned a ridge 2,500 feet above sea level or 1,200 feet above the Dittaino River which the attackers of both towns had to cross. And when both were taken, the Canadians were to swing to the east and drive on to Agrigara and Adrano 'without restraint'.

The capture of Assoro, the village just below the crest on the western side of the 3,000-foot mountain was assigned to the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment. Unfortunately, Lieutenant Colonel Sutcliffe, the CO of the regiment, was killed while reconnoitering the Assoro feature and the task fell to the 2 i/c, Major Lord Tweedsmuir, son of the former Governor General, who after a silent night march scaled the steep eastern face of the mountain and held the crest until the enemy was driven from the village below.<sup>5</sup>

In the meantime Leonforte was being dealt with by 2nd Brigade. The town was set below the crest of a steep hill on the far side of a deep ravine. The Edmonton, with their way prepared by artillery fire, climbed down into the ravine and up the other side into Leonforte while the sappers began to replace the bridge. The fierce struggle only came to an end when the PPCLI, mounted on the tanks, stormed across the bridge to reinforce the Edmonton, and the heights over Leonforte were cleared.





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Tropical dress on board during the voyage to Sicily. The bush jacket could be worn loose or tucked into the shorts

Some eight miles east of Leonforte the mediaeval town of Agira sat high on its hilltop. On the afternoon of 22 July, the GOC gave his instructions for the capture of Agira to the three Canadian brigades and the British Malta Brigade which had been placed under his command for this operation.

The attack on Agira was to be made that night along Highway 121 by a battalion of 1st Brigade. The 2nd Brigade was to form a firm base around Assoro and Leonforte while the 231st (Malta) Brigade was to threaten Agira from the south. The 48th Highlanders were to occupy the road junction east of Leonforte so the RCR could pass through, but heavy artillery fire caught the 48th Highlanders in their FUP, and machine-gun and mortar fire broke up the first attack.

On the morning of 24 July the GOC gave detailed orders for the capture of Agira by night-fall. At 15:00 hours, the artillery programme opened up and the RCR, supported by 'A' Squadron, Three Rivers Regiment, began the attack led

personally by Lieutenant Colonel Crowe. Difficulties arose immediately and the RCR came under heavy fire which separated the companies. Communications broke down and Colonel Crowe was killed.

Late on 24 July it was obvious the enemy was not dislodged and General Simonds ordered 1st Brigade to renew the attack that night. Early on 25 July the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment marched into Nissoria and advanced on Agira. Although the forward German positions were overrun, the main defences supported by dug-in tanks held firm and the Hastings were forced to withdraw.

On the evening of the 25th, Brigadier Graham sent in his last battalion, the 48th Highlanders. At 18:00 hours a company attack was launched against the German position on Mount Nissoria. At first there was little opposition, but strong resistance developed from reverse slope positions. About midnight 'C' Coy assaulted the objective but was held off by tanks and machine-guns; the commanding officer ordered the attempt to be called off.

It was now the turn of 2nd Brigade and early on 26 July the GOC ordered 2nd Brigade to

relieve 1st Brigade and attack Agira that evening. To ensure the capture of Agira, 2nd Brigade ordered a bombardment to commence at 15:45 hours with the Patricias going into the town. About noon an eager artillery officer found himself in the middle of Agira with no signs of the enemy. The bombardment was cancelled and at 14:30 hours the Patricias entered the town where they encountered pockets of resistance which required two hours of house fighting. And so, at last, Agira fell. **MD**

#### Notes

1. The assignment of Canadians to the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 occurred only after serious consideration by political and military authorities of Britain and Canada. The background to this decision is outlined in the opening chapter of *The Canadians in Italy, 1943-1945 Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, Volume II*, by G.W.L. Nicholson.

2. Unlike World War I when the original mobilisation plan was ignored and the entire First Contingent of the CEF assembled in Camp Valcartier, those units designated for mobilisation in World War II were assembled at unit headquarters, recruited up to strength and equipped as well as possible. When ready, the units were moved to Halifax for embarkation to England. The actual steps followed during the mobilisation of the 1st Canadian Division are set out in *Six Years of War, Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, Volume I*, by C.P. Stacey.

3. The Scouts and Snipers platoon does not exist on the official establishment of the infantry battalion. However, being a very useful formation, most battalions created a Scouts and Snipers Platoon on an ad hoc basis. This was the most informal unit of irregular soldiers in the battalion, if not the army, and usually consists of 30 ace ranks. In his excellent book, *Once a Patricia* Lieutenant C.S. Frost tells the story of the pointed end of battle and his

experience as a platoon commander of the Scouts and Snipers Platoon.

4. Originally designed as a chemical weapon, the 4.2-inch mortar was not commonly used as such. In preparation for El Alamein, a group of 4.2-inch mortars firing normal HE bombs was included in the fire-plan, and because of its success the weapon was added to the heavy weapons component of the infantry. A 4.2-inch mortar company was included with each Brigade Support Group. Although intended to be assigned to each infantry brigade, the Support Group was a very flexible formation and for some operations the three mortar companies were grouped into a single unit.

5. The tropical clothing issued to the troops three days out of Scotland consisted of cotton drill bush jacket, shorts, short puttees and hose tops. The wedge-pattern field service caps were still on issue and divisional and unit insignia was mounted on the jacket. The battle dress was packed in the kit bags which went into unit storage. The Sicilian summer weather was unbearably hot and the roads covered with white dust. But as the campaign moved to Italy in September, the troops shivered in their gas capes — their only protection from the chill mountain mists and the cold autumn rains. It was not until the second week in October that the kit bags and bed rolls were brought up to the units and the soldiers went back into battle dress. (War diaries, 48th Highlanders of Canada, and the Loyal Edmonton Regiment.)

6. The capture of Assoro by the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment was probably the most dramatic Canadian operation in the Sicilian campaign. The mountainous feature, rising abruptly over 3,000 feet from the floor of the valley, had to be climbed at night up its steepest face. A detailed description of this operation is written up in the Hastings regimental history, *The Regiment*, by Farley Mowat, and also in Nicholson's *The Canadians in Italy, 1943-1945, The Official History of the Canadian Army*, Vol 11.

A sergeant of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada after several days of marching in the hot Sicilian weather. The bandolier carried 50 rounds of small arms ammunition





# The 'Kninja' Warriors of Krajina-Serbia

RICHARD SCHNEIDER  
Translation by KIMI LUM

IN THE FIRST installment of this two-part article, Austrian journalist Richard Schneider becomes the first Westerner to penetrate the high security of the fanatically anti-Croat Serbian 'Kninja' guerrillas. In the interest of veracity, we have not attempted to moderate the language, which we hope will not cause offence. Next month, we go on a mission with the group.

'CHEROKEE' MIGHT have forgotten it. But then as he's filling out the date on his daily report, it comes back to him: he's turned 22 today.

For this young Serb with the Mohawk haircut, however, there'll be no time for celebration. His next mission will begin at nightfall. Only three hours away. It's a dangerous assignment. Until then he's got to study the map, brief the others and check the equipment. Besides that he'd like to get a little shut-eye, as he's been on duty for the last 36 hours straight.

For Milos — 'Cherokee's' real name — there's nothing unusual about any of this. He belongs to the 'Kommandosis' and is used to being on duty for days on end. This special unit is a terror group of sorts, around 30 men strong. They're all Krajina-Serbs and they fear nothing.

Most of these young men are not much older than Milos and willing to die for their ideals. To kill for them too. They're masters at their bloody trade. They've got it down to perfection and know a slew of variations on the means to their ends. In broad daylight and under cover of night. By ambush and by open attack. Noiselessly and in loud, horrific raids.

'Today's operation,' Milos explains to me, 'calls for the silent method.' He and his boys are to go out 'stalking prey' which in their jargon refers to taking prisoners. The target of this nighttime operation is an enemy bunker. It's on a hill just three kilometres behind the Croat front. If you count the strip of no-man's land, it's some five kilometres from the closest Serb post.

This area is typical for here, for the part of Krajina located at the southernmost tip of the

region. We're just a few kilometres from the strip of coastline which connects the two cities Zadar and Sibenik. A thick layer of shrubs stretches as far as the eye can see and everywhere sharp rocks jut out of the ground. In the summer the climate is no less harsh. During the day temperatures can reach 40° Celsius. At night they drop to the point of being almost downright cold.

In short, it's the perfect habitat and climate for the horned vipers, scorpions and poisonous spiders. Still, none of this has been able to deter or discourage the Serbs and Croats from their three-year long struggle over every single inch of ground. It's beyond my comprehension.

In the last three days Milos and his men have done a careful job of scouting out the desolate area. Whenever they go out by day, they wear Croat uniforms, and in so doing they take advantage of the widespread confusion prevailing in this civil war. Once they even ran into real Croats. It was at the changing of the crew that holds down the very bunker which is going to be raided tonight.

The Croats were fooled by their enemy's disguise and allowed themselves to be drawn into a brief conversation with the 'Kommandosis'. As a result the Serbs now know that it will not be possible to approach the bunker from the northern slope of the hill. It's booby trapped with mines.

A 'Kommandosi' is a living bomb, drilled month after month to one end only: to kill. Just the best make it into this troop which recruits its members from the 'Kninjas', the notorious elite unit under the command of the Serb warlord Kapetan Dragan.

The Commander of the 'Kommandosis' is 30-year-old

'Pope', a former theology student. He and his men are called into action whenever the regular army of the self-proclaimed 'Republic of Serb Krajina' cannot or is not supposed to intervene.

One example of such a situation is when enemy positions need to be scouted out in order to plan a larger offensive. Or, as in this case, when officially a cease-fire is in place while political negotiations are being conducted. In such a situation, of course, it's in your best interest to maintain the most positive image possible in the eyes of the world, and this entails limiting yourself to sporadic and isolated nighttime aggressions.

'We're like the American "Green Berets",' explains 19-year-old Vanja — the youngest in the group — as justification for the terrorist aggressions he participates in. 'They were sent into the Vietnam Wars, and they weren't exactly squeamish about what they had to do either. When push came to shove, cutting throats and setting bombs was all in a day's work.'

His friend nods in absolute agreement. Bota is 20, he comes from a little village near Benkovac which is source of his grudge against and fuel for his ever-growing hatred of the Croats. Last January they burned his village to the ground. His only desire remains to take revenge and to recover the 6,000 DM from where they're still hidden in the ruins of his family's house; 'hidden so well', he says with conviction, 'that the fire won't have gotten to them'. At least that's what he hopes. And he's got his entire future staked on this hope.

Neither he nor 20-year-old Jovan, however, are banking on an end to the war in the near future. 'After everything that's happened,' states Jovan, 'we, Krajina Serbs, will never be able to live in a Croat state. Both sides have already committed far too many atrocities for that. And Tudjman will never relinquish Krajina. At least not of his own free will.'

For Jovan that is a mouthful. Normally he hardly ever says anything. But what he's just said was spoken gravely and devoid of all emotions, something you don't find often in a Serb. Actually I've never wit-

nessed him show emotions of any kind, except for once when he laughed about one of Milo's skulls, but then he was only laughing because the others were

Rodja, also quiet, is another who doesn't fit in with the rest, but with him the difference is probably that his 38 years make him the oldest in the group. He comes from Rijeka. When the war broke out in the spring of 1991, he fled from there taking a roundabout route through Austria and Hungary. 1,300 kilometres later he made it to Krajina; a more direct route would have entailed a mere 300 kilometres. Now he's in charge of the arsenal and specialises in making bombs.

In his arsenal he's got every kind of explosive at his disposal. Some detonate at the slightest vibration, others are equipped with a delayed-action cap. He's especially proud of the ones with the solar-cell detonators. You set them at night, and they explode when the first rays of sunlight fall on them.

In addition to these there are a number of handcrafted bombs that have his expert personal touch, such as water bottles into which he puts a good dose of TNT. He attaches a detonator to the cap, but before closing it, he fills the bottle with a little water to give the whole thing a realistic touch. He has no remorse whatsoever. 'The other side has their own dirty tricks,' he says. 'They even set bombs under the corpses, the kind that explode as soon as you take the weight off them.' That's why the 'Kommandosis' always carry a 20-metre long rope with them. If they want to recover the body of a fellow fighter, they tie it to the corpse's leg, and use it to drag the body from where it lay.

'That's saved some of us our lives, no shit, man does this war suck!' Cherokee's darkening his face with camouflage paint as he says this. A little while later, he gets up and goes off with Vanja and Bota to stalk prey. To capture Croats. When he gets back he'll eat his birthday present, a melon, which he'll cut open with the same knife he's taken with him to kill with. He knew what he was talking about; this war really does suck. **MI**





*The Kninjas who train officers and reservists are hardly older than 20*

*Kninjas in action in Skabrnje.*







Kapetan Dragan gives his officers instructions in the casino

Kapetan Dragan observing the battle for the hill Razovljeve glavica near Skabrnje





# Loftie's British Officers' Uniforms 1795-1814

RENE CHARTRAND

'FIRST OR ROYAL Regiment of Foot 1804 — A Field officer in full uniform' Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced blue, gold buttons, gold embroidered buttonholes showing on both sides of the lapels, white turnbacks. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. Black waist sword-belt with gold round clasps. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings

'2nd or Queens Royal Regiment of Foot, 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced blue, silver buttons and lace, white or silver piping edging the collar, cuffs and lapels, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

[4th] 'IVth or Kings Own Regiment of Foot 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced blue, silver buttons, no lace, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate.

LAST MONTH WE examined the career of Major William Loftie, a talented artist who recorded in sketches and watercolours many of the uniform variations worn by his fellow officers. These were later copied by the late Cecil C.P. Lawson for the Anne S.K. Brown Collection. Here we look at examples from the 1st to 36th Regiments.

Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

[9th] 'IXth or East Norfolk Regiment Grenadier Officer 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced yellow, silver buttons, no lace, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

'10th or North Lincolnshire Regiment of Foot 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced yellow, white piping edging collar, cuffs and lapels, silver buttons, no lace, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White

shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate with a round silver centre. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

[11th] 'XIth or North Devonshire Regiment of Foot 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced blue, gold buttons, no lace, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings

[12th] 'XIIth or East Suffolk Regiment 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced yellow, silver buttons, no lace, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson

sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt, probably with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings

[15th] 'XVth or Yorkshire East Riding Regiment of Foot Officer Grenadier Company 1799' — Black bearskin cap with gilt plate, silver cord and white plume. Scarlet coat faced yellow (collar has scarlet front edged with white), silver lace and buttons, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sabre. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

'16th or Buckinghamshire Regiment of Foot. The uniform as worn on duty till 1796 when laced hats were abolished by a general order' — Black bicorn laced silver, black plume, silver tassels. Scarlet coat faced yellow, silver lace and buttons, white turnbacks. Silver gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black gaiters with yellow tops and black shoes. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

'16th or Buckinghamshire

**Far left:**

16th Regiment of Foot, field officer, 1803. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie. (All photos Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University.)

**Left:**

20th Regiment of Foot, officer, 1795. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie

**Right:**

15th Regiment of Foot, officer of the Grenadier Company, 1799. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie

**Far right:**

12nd Regiment of Foot, officer of the Light Company, 1801. Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson after William Loftie





Regiment of Foot Officer 1800, 1804' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced yellow, silver lace and buttons (lace showing on both sides of lapel), white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black gaiters and shoes. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

'Field Officer 16th or Buckinghamshire Regiment of Foot 1803' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced yellow, silver lace and buttons (lace showing across on both sides of lapel), white turnbacks. Crimson sash. Dark blue breeches. Black boots and tassels. Black waist sword-belt with small gold clasps. Gilt-hilted sabre. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

'16th or Buckinghamshire Regiment of Foot, undress worn on the expedition against Surinam in 1804' — Black round hat with black cockade in front. Scarlet single-breasted coat with yellow collar and cuffs, silver buttons, no lace, white turnbacks. Note the scarlet shoulder straps edged with silver lace instead of epaulettes. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots and tassels. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword with black and gilt scabbard. Sky blue water canteen with brown leather sling worn over right shoulder. White duck haver-

sack, marked '16' Regt' with sling worn over left shoulder.

'17th or Leicestershire Regiment of Foot 1800' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced white, silver lace and buttons (lace showing on both sides of lapel), white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black gaiters and shoes. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

[19th] 'XIXth or 1st Yorkshire North Riding Regiment 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced blue, gold lace and buttons, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Scabbard not visible.

[20th] 'XXth or East Devonshire Regiment of Foot 1795' — Black bicorn, black plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced yellow, silver lace and buttons, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black gaiters with yellow tops, black shoes. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword. Black scabbard with gold fittings.

[21st] 'XXIst or Royal North British Regiment of Fusiliers 1801' — Black Tarleton helmet with black bearskin crest, leopard skin turban, silver band, black visor, white plume.

Scarlet coat, dark blue facings (pointed cuffs) edged with gold lace, gold buttons, gold wings, no other lace, white turnbacks. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate. Sword not visible, black and gilt scabbard.

[22nd] 'XXIInd or Cheshire Regiment of Foot 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced buff, silver buttons, no lace, white turnbacks. gold gorget. Crimson sash. Buff breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword, scabbard not visible.

[24th] 'XXIVth or 2nd Warwickshire Regiment of Foot 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced green, white piping edging lapels and cuffs (but not the collar), silver lace (showing on both sides of lapel) and buttons, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with gold square belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword, black and gilt scabbard.

[25th] 'XXVth or Sussex Regiment of Foot 1801' — Black bicorn, white over red plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced yellow, white piping edging lapels, collar and cuffs, gold lace and buttons, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black gaiters and

shoes. White shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword, black and gilt scabbard.

[31st] 'XXXIst or Huntingdonshire Regiment of Foot 1801 Officer: Light Company' — Black cap with silver badge in front and silver band, white fur (?) crest, green plume, black visor. Scarlet coat, buff facings, silver buttons, no lace, silver wings, buff turnbacks. Crimson sash. Buff breeches. Black boots and tassels. White shoulder sword-belt. Steel hilted sabre, black leather and steel scabbard.

'32nd or Cornwall Regiment of Foot 1801 Officer, Light Company' — Black Tarleton helmet with black bearskin crest, green turban with silver chains, black visor edged silver, green plume. Scarlet coat, white facings (plain, indented cuffs), lapels only edged with gold lace, gold buttons, gold wings, no other lace, white turnbacks. Crimson sash. Grey breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sabre, black and gilt scabbard.

[33rd] 'XXXIIIrd or 1st Yorkshire West Riding Regiment of Foot Grenadier Officer' — Black bicorn, white only plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat with scarlet facings, silver buttons, silver lace, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black boots. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword, black and gilt scabbard.

[34th] 'XXXIVth or Cumberland Regiment 1799 Officer, Light Company' — Black cap with silver 24 in front and silver band, white fur (?) crest, green plume, black visor. Scarlet coat, yellow facings (note the pointed cuffs), silver buttons, no lace, silver wings, white turnbacks. Crimson sash. Red waistcoat with silver lace and buttons. White breeches. Black boots and tassels. White shoulder sword-belt with silver oval belt-plate. Steel hilted sabre, black leather and steel scabbard.

[36th] 'XXXVIth or Herefordshire Regiment of Foot 1802' — Black bicorn, white only plume, gold and crimson tassels. Scarlet coat faced blue, white piping edging collar, lapels and cuffs, gold buttons, no lace, white turnbacks. Gold gorget. Crimson sash. White breeches. Black gaiters and shoes. White shoulder sword-belt with gold oval belt-plate. Gilt-hilted sword, black and gilt scabbard.

To be continued







**Above:**  
16th Regiment of Foot, officer  
in service dress during the  
expedition against the Dutch  
in Surinam during 1804.

**Below:**  
31st Regiment of Foot, officer  
of the Light Company, 1801.  
Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson  
after William Lottie



**Above:**  
21st Regiment of Fusiliers,  
officer, 1801. Watercolour by  
C.C.P. Lawson after William  
Lottie

**Below:**  
14th Regiment of Foot, officer  
of the Light Company, 1799.  
Watercolour by C.C.P. Lawson  
after William Lottie





# The German Struggle Against Tito's Partisans

DAVID LITTLEJOHN

THE ITALIAN 'BERGAMO' Division on the offshore island of Split fought off an attack by the 'Prinz Eugen' for nearly three weeks. By the time of their final surrender the Italians were, legally speaking, 'the enemy', since Italy had become a 'co-belligerent' of the Allies on 13 September. They were not accorded the rights of prisoners-of-war by the 'Prinz Eugen' victors who shot out of hand two Generals and SS other Italian officers after the garrison capitulated.

In October 1943 the 'Prinz Eugen' was added to the list of numbered Waffen-SS divisions to become 7 SS Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Division 'Prinz Eugen'. Its two Gebirgsjäger Regiments were re-numbered 13 and 14. The Tank Company and the Tank Reconnaissance Platoon (Panzer-Compagnie and Panzer-Aufklärungs-Zug) and the two cavalry squadrons were un-numbered. All other sub-formations of the division were given the number 7. These comprised: an anti-tank detachment, an assault gun battery, a mountain artillery regiment, a Flak detachment, a signals section, a mountain reconnaissance detachment, a motorcyclist detachment, a pioneer battalion, a catering battalion, a supply company, a workshop company, a medical and a veterinary company, a war correspondents' platoon, a field gendarmerie troop and a replacement battalion. The Luftwaffe seconded a Fliegerstaffel (Flight) to the

LAST MONTH WE examined the war in Yugoslavia up to the Italian surrender. Here we concentrate on the Waffen-SS 'Prinz Eugen' Division during the remainder of the conflict. For further information from a different viewpoint, see page 29. For uniform details, see last month.

Division, mainly for aerial reconnaissance or the transport of senior officers. The following month (November 1943) the 'Prinz Eugen', now part of the V SS Mountain Corps, of which Phleps was commander, took part in this fresh offensive code-named *Kugelblitz* (Fireball). During this operation the 1st Mountain Division of the army was again deployed, along with the Croatian 369th Division and elements of the 187th Division. The Bulgarians contributed one division. But the offensive was badly planned and was called off on 18 December after the Bulgarians, now anxious to extricate themselves from their ruinous alliance with Germany, refused to carry out their orders. In an attempt to keep up the pressure the offensive was resumed in the new year (1944) under the code-name *Schneegestöber* (Snow Flurry) without the Bulgarians of the 'Prinz Eugen' which had been withdrawn to the Dubrovnik region for regrouping and further training. To replace it, Himmler ordered in the 13 SS Waffen Gebirgs-Division 'Handschar'. He felt

confident he could count on his Moslem SS men to deal mercilessly with the Serbs. He was not mistaken. The division, in this its first major action, distinguished itself by the scale of the atrocities it committed. To ensure that this victims were dead, they often cut out their hearts.

Like all previous offensives, this ground to a halt without achieving much more than the displacement of the foe from one region to another. After *Schwarz*, Tito had divided his army into four — sending one corps to each quarter of the country. Thus no single offensive could hope to achieve its total elimination. This fact had been borne in upon the German High Command by the spring of 1944. Only one possibility remained for dealing the Partisans a mortal blow. This was to capture or kill their inspirational leader. To accomplish this the Germans had recourse to a daring and desperate measure never before attempted against guerrillas — an airborne assault.

Since their costly victory at Crete in May 1941, the German

parachute formations had been employed mainly as élite infantry rather than airborne troops. It was the SS, new in this field of warfare, which was to provide the striking force for this hazardous venture. Early in 1943 it had formed SS Fallschirmjäger Bataillon 500 (SS Paratroop Battalion 500) officered by volunteers from various Waffen-SS divisions. Half the 'other ranks' were also genuine volunteers, the other half being paroled prisoners from SS penal companies who were offered the chance to 'redeem their honour' by volunteering for some particularly dangerous mission, of which this projected operation, code-named *Rösselsprung* (Knight's Move) was an ideal example. After special training at Kraljevo in Serbia, SS Paratroop Battalion 500, under the leadership of SS Hauptsturmführer Rybka, was ready for action.

Tito's headquarters were, at this time, located at Drvar in the Bosnian highlands, but in an area with sufficient flat ground to allow for glider-landing. In the early hours of 25 May 1944 a flight of Junkers 52 transports began to disgorge parachutists over Drvar. These were followed by waves of glider-towing aircraft (about 40 in all). The attack undoubtedly took the defenders by surprise, but it did not go off smoothly.

Several of the gliders crashed on landing killing their occupants. The 1st Mountain Division and the 'Prinz Eugen', scheduled to link up with their airborne comrades within the first 24 hours, failed to do so. Distances which might appear short on the battle maps at German headquarters tended to seem much longer when every yard of the way was contested by Partisan obstacles and ambushes. A second air-drop of paratroops took place at mid-day, but by this time the Allied air forces at Bari (in Italy) had been alerted and were flying sorties over the battle zone. The German forces pressed their attack with little regard to losses and the situation for Tito became so grave that the Allies decided to air-lift him out. On 3 June an RAF Dakota flew him to Italy. A week later he set up new headquarters on the British/Partisan held island of Vis.

As a result of *Rösselsprung* the Partisans suffered an estimated 6,000 casualties, but the



A bearded Chetnik officer in conversation with members of the 'Prinz Eugen' Division



Germans failed in their main objective. They captured Tito's dapper new 'Marshal of Yugoslavia' uniform, but not its wearer.

With Italy out of the war, Himmler pressed for the raising of new divisions for his Waffen-SS from those regions formerly occupied by the Italians. In Albania and the Kosovo region the 21 Waffen-Gebirgs-Division der SS 'Skanderberg' was formed. It had been intended to be, like the 'Handschar', an all-Moslem formation, but not enough volunteers of that faith presented themselves and it had to be padded out with draftees from other SS units. In action against the Partisans in its home region it disintegrated. Nearly a third of its members either deserted to the enemy or simply disappeared taking their weapons with them. The rump was designated a *Kampfgruppe* ('Battle group' — a conveniently vague term which could mean anything from several thousand men to a few score). Eventually the most reliable elements of the 'Skanderberg' were incorporated into the 'Prinz Eugen' as part of its Gebirgsjäger Regiment 14.

A projected Waffen-Gebirgs-Division der SS 'Kama', to be made up of Croat Moslems, was even less of a success. Some 8,000 volunteers were raised but, with the Red Army bearing down on their training camp in Hungary, all attempts to form a division were abandoned and the half-trained recruits simply distributed piecemeal to any combat unit in urgent need of replacements.

In the six months that followed the defection of Italy, Wehrmacht strength in Yugoslavia was built up to 30 divisions, not all, however, German. These included the three Croat divisions within the



A German Panzer officer with the Croat Ustase crew of a PzKpfw IV tank

German army (369th, 373rd and 392nd Infantry), a division of renegade Cossacks, and a similar apostate formation, the 162nd Turkoman Division. Representing the Waffen-SS were the 'Prinz Eugen' and the 'Handschar'. This build-up of strength was not occasioned by any intensification of the anti-Partisan war, but by the fear of an imminent Anglo-American landing — a prospect which alarmed Hitler. It was only the fact that it alarmed the Allied Joint Chiefs of Staff a great deal more that prevented it from becoming a reality.

Misfortune makes strange bed-fellows: Hitler, who had never ceased to caution Mussolini against the use of Chetniks, now permitted German officers in Montenegro, and elsewhere, to enter into 'renewable contracts' with Chetnik leaders for brief periods of co-operative action against the Partisans (the 'contracts' were usually of

between 5 and 10 weeks duration).

In July 1943 Artur Phleps had been promoted SS *Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen SS* and placed in command of the rather grandly styled V SS *Gebirgskorps* (this 'Mountain Corps' comprised the 'Prinz Eugen' and recently formed 'Handschar' Divisions of the Waffen SS, plus the 369th (Croat) Infantry Division and the 118th *Jäger* Division of the army). From July 1943 to July 1944 the commander of the 'Prinz Eugen' Division was SS *Brigadeführer u. Generalmajor der Waffen SS* Carl von Oberkamp.

By September 1944 the remorseless Soviet advance into south-east Europe had reached Rumania and was threatening the Siebenbürgen region from which many of the 'Prinz Eugen' men, including Phleps himself, originated. To prepare for an evacuation of the local Volksdeutsche before the region was engulfed by the Red Army, Phleps, accompanied only by his adjutant and driver, made a reconnaissance of the area. He appears to have failed to appreciate the speed of the Soviet advance for, at Arad on 21 September, he ran into a Red Army tank column and was taken prisoner. The Russians, not, it would seem, having grasped the importance of their catch, shot him. Allegations that some sort of 'mystery' surrounds his death, or that he died in a plane crash or, most far-fetched of all, that he switched sides to become a General in the Red Army, are without foundation.

On 1 August 1944, the

month before Phleps' death, command of the 'Prinz Eugen' was entrusted to SS *Brigadeführer u. Generalmajor der Waffen SS* Otto Kumm, one of the most distinguished officers in the Waffen SS.

The Red Army crossed the Yugoslav frontier on 1 October 1944. The 'Prinz Eugen' now had to prepare itself to face, for the first time, a professional army. The Russian advance had necessitated the abandonment of all idea of defending south-east Europe. German forces were now being hastily withdrawn northwards from Greece and Serbia. The 'Prinz Eugen' was assigned the task of protecting their flanks and rear. In this, thanks largely to Kumm's rigorous re-training, they acquitted themselves well. They earned the nickname *Feuerwehr des Balkans* (Balkan Fire Brigade) for their success in rescuing Volksdeutsche compatriots and fellow German military from the grip of the enemy. But the Red Army's advance was inexorable. The 'Prinz Eugen' was forced to capitulate in May 1945 under its third commander, SS *Brigadeführer u. Generalmajor der Waffen SS* August Schmidhuber who took over on 20 January 1945 when Kumm was recalled by Himmler to command the 1 SS Panzer Division *Leibstandarte 'Adolf Hitler'*.

Seven members of the 'Prinz Eugen' were awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross. In addition to all German bravery awards, members of the Division were entitled to, and frequently received, the bravery awards of the Independent State of Croatia. M



A file of Ustase parade through a Croat town



# Croatia in Newly-Formed Yugoslavia, 1918-1945

VELIMIR VUKSIC and DICK FISCHER

WITH THE DEFEAT of Habsburg Austria in World War I, Croatia as a distinct political entity ceased to exist. Amidst idealistic talk about self-determination for the Empire's subject peoples, in reality the victorious great powers had their own interests, which they worked out in peace conferences, secret deals and treaties which ended the war and redrew boundaries. The result was that the south Slav lands which had existed as subject peoples under various great empires were merged in to the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, under the rule of a Serbian king.

The Croatian people and their leaders embraced this new development with a wide variety of reactions. Many, it is true, saw this uniting of the Slav lands as liberation. After centuries of being kicked around like a political football by Austria's Habsburgs and the Hungarian nationalists for their own respective ends, here was finally a chance for a common Slav cause to be realised in their own state. Links with the Slovenes to the west and fellow Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina were strong, and there were some who viewed the Serbs as natural allies who would be agreeable to forming a mutually acceptable government.

Others were much more sceptical. In Austria's attempt to punish Serbia in the war that had just ended, Croats in the Austrian army had recently fought bitter battles opposite the Serbs. Many Croats looked dubiously at Serbia's real aims in light of the openly expressed longings for a 'Greater Serbia' by leading Serb politicians. In the process of the negotiations between the different parties after the war, numerous agreements, councils and declarations attempted to find a formula for a fair and acceptable Yugoslavia, but all came to nought. Leading Croatian 'pro-Yugoslav' politicians became disillusioned. Frano Supilo, for example, the driving force behind the Yugoslav Committee in exile, optimistically argued for an arrangement in which Croatia's sovereignty would be preserved in a united state. As negotiations with Serbian representatives dragged on Supilo

became convinced that it was a lost cause, and resigned on principle. The central point of contention was whether the new state would be a Greater Serbia, with all the south Slav lands simply annexed to Serbia, or whether it could be set up on a federal basis, in line with the principle of equality of its nations. This tension would dog Yugoslav national relations forever.

Finally on 1 December 1918, in response to one such proposal, Alexander, the Serbian Regent and heir to the throne, proclaimed the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Although it turned out very different from what Croatia had been longing for, many reasoned it may be the best they could do.

In 1941 Ustashi units consisted of 14 battalions and police force, totalling 15,000 men. The Black Legion, named for their black uniforms, had initially a strength of four battalions and grew to around ten battalions later. The Legion was known for its extremism and terror over the Serbian population. In 1944 (according to Belgrade's Military History Institute in 1972) Ustashi forces numbered 76,000 men. A large number of Serbian Partisans and Croatian patriots were killed in Ustashi jails and concentration camps. Because of Chetnik terror over the Muslim population in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, a large number of Muslims joined the Ustashi and Home Guard units. The personal guard of the leader of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC), Dr Ante Pavelic, was made up of Muslims from the Sanjak region, today a Muslim enclave in Serbia. Right up until the arrival in 1943 of the 13th SS Bosnia-Herzegovina 'Handschar' division from training in France, Muslims generally were serving in units of the ISC and the local militias.

## Between the two world wars

Croatia fared poorly in the new Kingdom under the heavy hand of the autocratic Alexander, who reigned first as Regent, then King, and after 1929, as absolute dictator. Never deviating from pursuit of a programme for creating a Greater Serbia, the Monarchy proceeded to institute a full-fledged Serbian regime in Croatia, imposing Serbian laws, with Serbian police in Croatian cities, and Serbian politicians replacing Croats in the top positions in their cities. The education system, taxation and manning of administrative posts all became tools of the Monarchy to impose Serbian hegemony over the Croats. Dozens of well-known Croats were arrested, tor-

tured and killed. The introduction of new constitutions and changes of governments all simply served to legalise Alexander's absolutist rule. In all this he relied on the full support of the Yugoslav army, which acted brutally throughout Croatia, increasingly alienating the populace in the process, and playing into the hands of Croats extremists.

Despite Croatia's own warrior tradition and the prominence of its soldiers throughout history, the Croatian units from the former Austro-Hungarian army were simply disbanded, as the Yugoslav army became a totally Serbian institution. Of the 165 generals in active service in 1926, all were Serbs except for two Croats and two Slovenes. The Yugoslav army was generally closed to Croatian officers, with Croats comprising only ten per cent of the officer corps in 1938, and the gendarmerie was exclusively Serbian.

## Longings for national sovereignty

The political scene in Croatia between the two world wars was dominated by the growing popularity of the Croatian





*Although it appears as though the Ustashi are posing for the photograph, the picture was taken during the battle with the Partisans at Sestak hill in 1942*

Peasant Party under the leadership of Stjepan Radic. Committed to democracy and peaceful change, Radic had been among the first to openly oppose the imposition of the Monarchy and the unitary system of government on Croatia, on the basis that it had never been democratically accepted. Never tiring in his efforts to gain some kind of autonomy, sovereignty and recognition of Croatian rights under the Serbian Monarchy, despite repressive persecution (includ-

ing imprisonment), Radic and his party increasingly demonstrated great popularity at the polls (receiving 25% of the vote of all of Yugoslavia, approximately equal to the whole Croatian population). The result that Radic's party became the primary threat to Serbian hegemony. On 20 June 1928, in a plot masterminded by the Monarchy and Greater Serbian politicians, Radic and two other Croatians were assassinated on the floor of the National Assembly in Belgrade. In response, Croatians took to the streets in protest strikes, demonstrations and riots, which sometimes grew quite violent.

On 6 January, 1929 King

Alexander abolished the constitution, dissolved the National Assembly and proclaimed a new government, responsible to him alone, renaming the state the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In a crackdown on nationalists and communists, the press was rigorously censored, Croatia's national names and symbols were outlawed and freedom of speech was abolished. Faced with growing opposition and the social ferment of the worldwide depression, Alexander was forced to bring in a new constitution in 1931, with a deceptive appearance of greater participative government. In fact the constitution strengthened unitarism, reorganising the

Kingdom into new administrative units, designed to further weaken national movements. But as an indication of public dissatisfaction, more voters abstained in the election to follow than ever Vlatko Macek, the heir to Radic as the embodiment of the Croatian people's voice, protested the growing absolutism despite intimidation and imprisonment.

Finally, shortly before World War II broke out, with the threat of extremist elements on both the left and the right rising alarmingly, Prince Paul and the premier Cvetkovic in desperation finally agreed to Macek's demand to give the Croatian people an assembly of their own, and along with it a degree of national autonomy. But by then it was far too late.

#### **Storm clouds**

That was the democratic Croatian mainstream. Growing in popularity alongside it with each repressive measure were the extremists of the right and the left, who skillfully exploited the popular discontent. Belgrade's repression played right into the hands of Croatia's extremist right wing, the 'Ustashi', a Croatian separatist group with a substantial following gathered around Ante Pavelic. In 1934, the Ustashi organisation, together with Macedonian revolutionaries,



*A detail of an Ustashi uniform with its Italian-cut cap. On the collar is the Croatian red-white-blue tricolour, and the cap has the Croatian coat of arms with the letter "U" in the centre. The uniform was a yellow-brown colour*



#### Croatian Partisan, 1942.

According to the official history of the former Yugoslavia, the dates of the beginning of the uprising against the occupiers in Yugoslavia was 7 July 1941 in Serbia and 27 July in Croatia, claiming both were carried out by Serbs. But already by 22 June near the city of Sisak not far from Zagreb, a detachment of 45 Croatian Partisans carried out its first action. One of the fighters in that detachment was the Commander of today's Croatian army, General Janko Bobetko. The Partisans generally armed themselves with weapons taken from the occupiers and wore uniforms from the old Yugoslav army, as well as others. Pictured is a Partisan with a three-pointed cap, worn frequently the first two years of the war, a German officer's riding breeches, and infantry boots

plotted and carried out the assassination of King Alexander while abroad. At home they became a focal point of the alienated violent part of the population, frequently challenging the dictatorship with force

On the left were the Communists, instigating strikes and demonstrations, while calling for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Thousands of Communists were imprisoned and a large number were executed under Alexander's dictatorship. The party was initially divided over the national question, but under Zagreb's Josip Broz, known as Tito, it coalesced and grew and by World War II it had become the best organised opposition network in all of Yugoslavia

By the end of the decade the horizon was overclouded by Hitler and Germany on the move to the east. Internationally, pro-French Yugoslavia moved toward neutrality between the German and French blocs by the mid-thirties, and a gradual economic dependence on Germany, which had become the country's largest trading partner. For the first 20 months of the war Yugoslavia managed to remain neutral, vacillating between the Allied and Axis powers. But on 25 March 1941 the government agreed to join the Axis, only to be overthrown in a coup two days later. On 6 April Hitler invaded Yugoslavia, together with Italian, Hungarian and Bulgarian troops, totally overwhelming the Yugoslav army. Eleven days later all of





The Croatian Home Guard was made up of some men and regular officers from the old Yugoslav army as well as officers from the former Austro-Hungarian army. Germans at first gave permission for its formation with 16,000 men, but after the uprising broke out they agreed to increase, so that by 1942 the Home Guard numbered 110,000 men. Because of the forced mobilisation the Home Guard units had little fighting value, with the consequence that a large part of these units went over to the Partisans, especially after the capitulation of Italy in 1943. The attempted reorganisation and introduction of German and Ustashi regular commanders yielded few results.

Yugoslavia was in Axis hands, with the government and King taking flight. The country was parcelled out to the various victors: Serbia was placed under German military administration and the territory of Croatia was made into the Independent State of Croatia (ISC), to which Bosnia-Herzegovina was then added, and placed under the Ustashi leader Pavelic.

#### **Independent and fascist: 1941-45**

Although many Croats looked upon the defeat of Yugoslavia as a release from the prison of a Serbian-dominated state, what happened during the war surely proved to be Croatia's blackest hour. The very treatment which the Croats had most resented they would now inflict on the Serbs a hundredfold. The Ustashi police state unleashed a reign of terror with mass arrests and killing, banning the Serbian Cyrillic script, closing their schools, requiring Serbs to wear coloured armbands, and forced conversions to Catholicism. Serbs were arrest-



**Liberated territory in Yugoslavia under the control of the Partisans at the end of 1943.** (*Military Encyclopedia, 1972, Book 5, p784*). According to the *Military Encyclopedia* the size of the occupation armies at the end of 1943 was the following: German army and police units, around 400,000 men; Bulgarian units, around 90,000; Hungarian units, around 40,000; Independent State of Croatia (ISC) Home Guard, 140,000; ISC Ustashi, 55,000; ISC police forces, 12,000; Serbian Chetniks of Draza Mihajlovic, 112,000; Serbian state guard of Milan Nedic, 37,000; Serbian volunteer corps, 6,000. Together with other Albanian, Muslim, Slovene and Montenegrin forces, this came to a total of 920,000. This statistic is relative because, for example, the large number of Partisan units forced the ISC government to keep a large number of people under arms. In Serbia, on the other hand, there were few Partisan forces as the population was generally loyal to the local occupation and Chetnik authori-

ties. For example, because of Tito's unsuccessful attempt in spring 1944 to penetrate into Serbia with Partisan units to call men to arms, the Chetniks mobilised an additional 34,000 men to oppose similar attacks in the future. Only with the help of the Russian Red Army, which crossed the Bulgarian border into Serbia in the autumn of 1944, did Tito crush the Chetnik movement in Serbia and conquer Belgrade.

At the end of 1943 the Partisan forces numbered about 300,000 in 114 brigades and a large number of smaller independent units. Of these brigades 14 were elite Proletarian brigades, mostly assembled on the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 24 were raised in Slovenia, 34 in Croatia, 19 in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 8 in Serbia, 3 in Montenegro, 1 in Macedonia and 11 were recruited from Italians (most after the capitulation of Italy) and other smaller ethnic groups. Because of losses and replacements for other units the 13th Brigade was disbanded. The Slovene and Italian

brigades numbered between 400 500 men, while the others had on the average between 850-950 each. In late 1942 divisions were formed, consisting of 2-4 brigades each. By late 1943 the brigades were scattered amidst 18 divisions and 8 corps. Five of these corps were Croatian. Of the total number of fighters in the Partisan units according to nationality, over 50% were Croats. It is worth noting that about a third of the units in Croatia were of Serbian or Serbian-Croatian ethnic mix, while about a third of the units in Bosnia-Herzegovina were made up of either Croatian, Croatian-Serbian, or Croatian-Muslim nationalities. Four of the eight brigades in Serbia were founded in Vojvodina, on territory where the majority population was Hungarian or Croatian.

Serbian postwar propaganda persistently insisted on the thesis that the Serbs liberated Yugoslavia and that they were the victors in World War II. The best document contradicting that thesis, however, is their own *Military*

*Encyclopedia*, published by the Military Publishing Institute in Belgrade in 1972. Up until the end of the war in Yugoslavia, 14 Proletarian brigades were formed, 31 brigades in Slovenia, 57 in Croatia, 35 in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 51 in Serbia proper, 15 in Vojvodina, 35 in Macedonia, and 19 Italian brigades. In the course of the war 39 of these were disbanded. By the war's end there were 800,000 fighters in these brigades, of which 30-40% at the most could have been Serbs. A large number of Serbians and Macedonians went over to the Partisans only in the final months of the war from the end of 1944 onwards, when Serbia and Macedonia were under Partisan and Russian control. During almost four years of warfare, Croats were the most numerous nationality among the Partisans. Fighting on both sides in World War II, Croats (who made up 20% of the population of Yugoslavia) were the people with the greatest percentage of men under arms, and who also suffered the greatest losses

ed and deported to concentration camps where they faced the most bestial brutality, with hundreds of thousands massacred. In response to fascist efforts to 'Croatianise' their territory, hordes of refugees streamed from their homes in



Group of Partisans photographed in 1944 in Gorski Kotar (the mountainous area between Zagreb and Rijeka). It is interesting how each of them is wearing different trousers and footwear. The Partisan on the far left is wearing a British uniform



**A Croatian legionnaire of the 369th Infantry Regiment, 100th German Infantry Division, Stalingrad, 1942.**

Among the German units fighting along the eastern front from 9 October 1941 to 2 February 1943 were 8,250 Croats. Of these, 6,300 served in the 369th Regiment, 1,250 in Italian light motorised brigade units, 360 were airmen flying in two fighter (Me 109, and two bomber (Do 17, squadrons, and 340 were sailors on the Black Sea. Only several hundred of these men survived, with the majority killed at Stalingrad. According to known contemporary statistics, around 70,000 Croats fought in German units. After Stalingrad, three other German legionnaire divisions were formed: the 369th 'Devil's' Division, the 392nd 'Blue' Division (named for their blue uniforms which had initially been intended for the Finnish army), and the 373rd 'Tiger' Division. The command staff was generally German, while the subordinate officers and soldiers were Croats. These units completed their military training in Germany and had German uniforms and weapons. They wore the Croatian coat of arms on the left side of their helmets and on their left sleeve.

Croatia over into Serbia, with the Orthodox Church and clergy singled out for particular persecution. The great dilemma facing the Croatian population was its lack of any decent alternatives. Although the regime's bestial programme was repulsive to most Croats, so were the communists. The only anti-totalitarian, democratically inclined hope with the support of a popular majority, Macek and the Croatian Peasant Party, tried to remain neutral. With no programme of their own equal to the horrific events around them, they failed to provide any clear leadership and were soon marginalised, leaving the mainstream with nowhere to turn.

**A nation under arms**

With the Axis invasion of Yugoslavia and the resistance which rose up to meet the invaders, Croatia was flooded with a number of competing armies, each having their own mandate and pursuing their own objectives. Besides the



## 26th Dalmation (Croatian) Division

Many British veterans who fought on the territory of Dalmatia will remember the soldiers of the 26th Division. Together with the Partisans of that division and the Croatian Partisan navy, British commandos and sailors took part in the struggle against the occupation forces for the Dalmatian coast and islands. The division was formed in October 1943 out of the 11th, 12th and 13th Dalmatian Brigades. On the day of its formation it had 3,800 fighters and three batteries of artillery, with its headquarters on the island of Vis. By the beginning of 1945 the division had grown to 12,000 men. In December 1944 that division, together with the 9th,

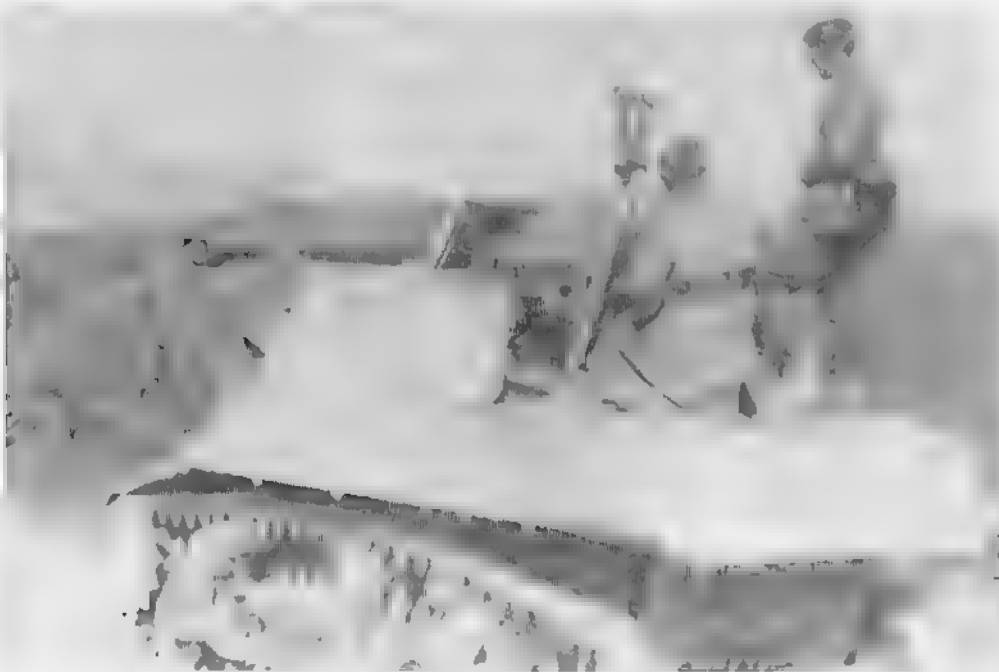


19th and 20th Dalmatian (Croatian) Divisions destroyed the occupation forces (among which was the so-called Chetnik Dinaric Division, numbering 6,000 men, with its headquarters in Knin) for which it was congratulated by Tito himself.

Besides the captured Italian and German arms, the soldiers of the Dalmatian units were armed and equipped primarily with British weapons. In Italy in mid-1944, the 1st Tank Brigade, which became a part of the 26th Dalmatian Division, was made up largely

*Flak-Stuart, an M5 mounting a 20mm Flakvierling.*

*Pak-Stuart, an M5 mounting a 7.5cm Pak 40.*



of Croatians along with some Slovenes and Montenegrins. The brigade consisted of four tank battalions, two companies of armoured cars and an anti-tank battery. It numbered around 800 men, along with 100 M3 and M5 Stuart tanks, and 20 armoured cars. Fighting in that brigade was the current President of Croatia, Dr Franjo Tudjman. It is interesting that in the brigade workshops parts of damaged tanks were reworked into self-propelled vehicles armed with German 7.5cm Pak 40 anti-tank guns and 20mm Flakvierling 38 anti-aircraft guns.

The equipping of the Dalmatian divisions, the tank brigade and the Partisan Navy with British weaponry was the first significant military help from the West. Up until then, arms had usually been sent to the Chetniks via the Yugoslav government in exile in London.

occupying German and Italian forces, the Independent State of Croatia fielded its own significant army, made up of both its Home Guard (*domobran*) and Ustashi troops, which by the war's end was as large as 156,000 soldiers.

One of the consequences of the Ustashi atrocities was to drive large numbers of Croatians over to the Partisans, which were led by the Croatian Communist Josip Broz, known as Tito. The Partisans, in fact, were the only ones in Croatia willing to counter the fascist regime with any effective leadership. Even though communists formed only a small part of the Partisan forces, they were

well-organised and disciplined and occupied all the command positions. Large numbers of Croatians joined their ranks, attracted by their willingness to challenge the fascist regime, and by their promise of equality among the various ethnic groups in a republican state after the war. Many of the Croatian Home Guard, disillusioned by the direction the Pavelic regime was taking, went over to the Partisans from 1942 onwards. By the end of the war there were 150,000 Partisan soldiers in the 'National Liberation Army of Croatia', serving under the command of the Croatian General Staff.

On the Croatian territory with a majority Serbian population, yet another army, the Chetniks, made its appearance, initially siding with the anti-fascist cause, while in fact fighting toward a Greater Serbian outcome. Under the command of Draza Mihailovic from Serbia, these Chetniks waged a bloody campaign against Muslim and Croatian villages, murdering thousands of civilians on the territory of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as in Serbia proper. Their narrow nationalistic aims led them into conflict with Tito's forces, and they increasingly sided with the Axis powers in opposition to the Partisans' growing authori-

ty.

A fierce civil war grew particularly bitter in places where Croatians lived side by side with persecuted Serbs, whose armed resistance to the Ustashi regime was especially strong. Beginning with guerrilla operations and so-called 'Proletarian Brigades', the Partisans' forces grew into a formidable fighting force, gaining reluctant support and the admiration of the Allies for their effectiveness against Hitler. Tito and his Partisans liberated and then connected chunks of territory from the Nazis, fought the Italians, Germans, Chetniks and Ustashi armies heroically, and eventually swept through the country

in pursuit of the retreating German troops.

### The 'Croatian Golgotha'

At the end of the war hundreds of thousands of civilians and soldiers of the defeated Independent Croatian army fled out of fear — both of the coming communist regime and of the vengeance they suspected would be wreaked on them by the Partisan army. Long columns of refugees filed through Slovenia and Austria, hoping to throw themselves on the mercy of the victorious Allies. But after being disarmed by the British authorities in Austria, most were turned back over to the Partisan army. There mass executions followed, with about 30,000-40,000 civilians and POWs summarily executed. Although these events were covered up by the Communist government during the last 45 years, mass graves have been discovered near Bleiburg, Austria, and other Austrian and Slovenian towns holding several times that number of such victims. Although definite confirmation is difficult, some historians have estimated that the Partisans shot from 70,000 to 100,000 people without trial within weeks of the war's end.

The Communists' promise of democracy and freely elected government came to naught, just like everywhere else in Eastern Europe. Very soon, Tito and his Communist Party shoved their non-communist wartime allies out of power, and they ruled Yugoslavia with an iron fist. Croatia as a politically entity was but part of the Yugoslav whole, with no special influence or self-rule. Although Yugoslavia evolved as a somewhat more humane and freer society than its other communist neighbours, Tito clearly reigned from Belgrade like an absolute monarch, implementing his decisions throughout the country through his party, the so-called League of Communists. But communist Yugoslavia — despite its pretentious claims — was destined to fall with all the others and give Croatia yet another chance. **MM**

## TWELVE CENTURIES OF STRUGGLE

A new book on the military history of Croatia by Velimir Vukšić is due in the shops any day.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Great Commanders** by Phil Grabsky, Foreword by David G. Chandler. Boxtree; ISBN 1-85283-417-X; 192pp; col & mono illu. throughout; bibliography & index; £15.99.

This is 'the book of the film' in the sense it is the complementary volume to the six part Channel 4 television series just finishing its run. Regular readers will already be aware of this through David Coward's 'Gallery' portraits of the young Alexander, Napoleon, Grant and, this month, Zhukov. In addition to these, the TV series and book both include Julius Caesar and Horatio Nelson as well.

Each chapter of the book gives an incisive description of the forces moulding each commander's character and military ability; describes the nature and abilities of both his own and his opponents' armies, and demonstrates his qualities as a leader through a detailed analysis of one specific battle. These are Issus, Alesia, Trafalgar, Austerlitz, The Wilderness and Berlin. Each is accompanied by a colour map (or, in the case of Trafalgar, '3D' diagram).

Phil Grabsky's text is clear and authoritative and the photographs — many taken by the author — are clear and well chosen. Overall, a very attractive package, highly readable and informative. One only hopes that the TV series has been sufficiently successful that Channel 4 will produce a sequel featuring another six 'Great Commanders'.

**History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France, Vols V & VI** by W.F.P. Napier. Constable; ISBNs 0-09-471880-6 & -471890-3; 622 & 710pp; maps; £19.95 each.

The final two volumes in Napier's classic study of the Peninsula Campaigns are now available. Volume V continues the story from May 1812 to July 1813, including the battles of Salamanca and Vittoria and the expulsion of Soult's and Joseph's forces from Spain. Volume VI covers the period up to April 1814 during which Wellington took the war into France itself. Both volumes include maps as well as letters and despatches and, although there is no index, the layout of the contents pages makes it really easy to find a specific reference. If you have not bought the earlier four volumes, now is the time to collect the complete set — before they go out of print again and cost double the price!

**Overlord Coastline: The Major D-Day Locations** by Stephen Chicken. Spellmount; ISBN 1-837736-14-6; 104pp; mono illu. & maps; appendix & bibliography; £11.95.

Anyone contemplating visiting Normandy next summer for the 50th anniversary of D-Day will

undoubtedly be thinking about reliable guidebooks. This one is certainly a contender, although the maps are rather too simplified to be of great help. It is broken down by individual operations, both amphibious and airborne, with descriptions of opposing forces, Allied plans, what actually happened in each case, and descriptions of what can be seen today and how to get there. The text contains many snippets of useful material, which have not previously appeared in print, and Lieutenant-General Sir Napier Crookenden says in his Foreword that he regards it as 'an excellent guide and companion' which he wishes could have been written twenty years ago. While we agree with the sentiment, it is rather overpriced for such a slim paperback.

**The Russian Elite: Inside Spetsnaz and the Airborne Forces** by Carey Schofield. Greenhill; ISBN 1-85367-155-X; 288pp; mono plates; appendices & index; £16.95.

Ever since the existence of Spetsnaz became publicly known, this elite Russian unit has attracted a great deal of speculation, much of it misinformed or deliberately misleading. Thanks to the end of the Cold War, journalist Carey Schofield has now been privileged to spend time with the men of Spetsnaz, even joining them on training exercises during which the men were convinced she was really a member of SAS and were thrilled to meet someone from their English counterpart organisation!

Ms Schofield was allowed to interview many officers and men and her book is full of first-hand accounts of operations in Afghanistan as well as a clear description of the Russian elite forces since the collapse of the Soviet Union. She dismisses earlier theories that Spetsnaz were responsible for operating as spies in TIR trucks or disguised as crewmen in merchant ships, claiming that such operations were carried out by other organisations, but Spetsnaz is GRU-controlled, so the speculation must remain, as it does over the mysterious deaths among scientists working in defence-related areas over the years.

Overall, this is an interesting readable account which still leaves doubts in this reviewer's mind.

**1812: The March on Moscow** by Paul Britten Austin; Greenhill; ISBN 1-85367-154-1; 416pp; maps & mono plates; bibliography & index; £30.00.

The result of 20 years research, this is an enthralling account drawing heavily on contemporary documents, diaries and letters, describing the advance of the Grande Armée to Moscow in the long, hot summer of 1812. The story is as

dramatic as it is massive in scale. It shows the French Corps struggling to come to grips with an elusive foe and vividly describes the confrontations which did occur, notably at Smolensk and Borodino.

There have been many other books on this campaign, but the publishers claim — and it certainly seems a reasonable claim — that 80 per cent of the material has never before been published in English. Regardless, the narrative is superbly handled, swinging from the broad perspective of strategy to the experiences and feelings of the men trudging all those hundreds of miles. It is, as Clausewitz would have said, 'a passionate drama', and we can imagine no Napoleonic enthusiast failing to read it.

**The Cross of Sacrifice: Officers Who Died in the Service of British, Indian and East African Regiments and Corps 1914-1919** by S.D. and D.B. Jarvis. Roberts Medals Ltd, 6 Titan House, Calleva Park, Aldermaston, RG7 4QW; ISBN 1-873058-26-8; 380pp; £24.99.

Claimed to be 'the most significant new book series for medal collectors in over 50 years', this is the first volume in a new series from Roberts Medals. The second volume will cover the RN, RNR, RNRV, RM, RNAS and RFC/RAF, while the third will embrace those officers who died in service of the Commonwealth and Colonial Regiments and Corps.

The first volume lists alphabetically by surname over 44,000 officers identifying hundreds of names not previously listed as shown in the complete series of Commonwealth War Graves Registers. Other information, provided in 'shorthand' but with a clear key at the front of the book, includes initials, rank and regiment, attachments and parent regiments, decorations and date and cause of death where known. In many cases these differ from those printed in previous publications.

A well-produced book which, we are told, took over ten years to research, and which will undoubtedly be welcomed by medal collectors.

**Fuzzy Wuzzy: The Campaigns in the Eastern Sudan 1884-85** by Brian Robson. Spellmount; ISBN 1-873376-15-4; 228pp; mono plates & maps; appendices, bibliography & index; £19.95.

Although overshadowed by the drama of the Gordon Relief Expedition, Sir Gerald Graham's campaign — the first in which the British encountered the fanatical fighting power of the Dervish armies — were among the bloodiest ever fought by the British Army.

Using original War Office records



and unpublished personal accounts. Brian Robson has recreated vividly those almost forgotten campaigns against Osman Digna on the Red Sea coast. He carefully contrasts the two armies and gives a careful analysis of logistic and administrative background as well as the battles. A useful appendix lists campaign medals and Victoria Crosses.

Overall, a remarkable piece of research, well-written and of major interest to those many 'Mr' readers who particularly enjoy the Colonial period.

**Waterloo Letters** edited by Major-General H.T. Siborne. Greenhill: ISBN 1-85367-156-8; 415pp; gatefold maps; index; £19.50.

Although Siborne's work has recently come under critical scrutiny (see next month), the 25th title in Greenhill Books' Napoleonic Library is a 'must' for all those who like their information first-hand rather than from secondary sources. As its title suggests, it is a compilation of letters, both official and private, from men who took part in the Waterloo campaign. They are conveniently arranged under the names of regiments and corps so anyone with a particular interest in, say, the Scots Greys, can turn straight to that section.

*Military Illustrated* would like to recommend Greenhill Books on this series which is an invaluable addition to the literature on and of the period.

**Watermen of War** by Colonel John Pearn. Amphion Press, Dept of Child Health, University of Queensland, Royal Children's Hospital, Brisbane, Q. 4029, Australia; ISBN 0-86776-500-3; 277pp; mono photos, maps & sketches throughout; Notes & Index; \$30.00 (Aus) inc p&p.

This unusual and fascinating book tells the story of the 700 men who formed No 45 Australian Water Transport Operating Company of the Royal Australian Engineers during World War II. Their task was inshore logistic support using landing craft, an essential if unromantic role, but their adventures were legion and are faithfully recounted here both from official documents and from personal reminiscences, diaries and letters. The book also reveals in the minute detail so essential to accurate historical research, with precise descriptions and data tables on ships, vehicles, weapons and personal equipment, as well as maps, precise numbers of men, with tanks, involved in different operations, and quantity of stores transported. The photographs are also well captioned, and the book in fact stands almost as a microcosm of the Australian Army at war. The publishers are a non-profit organisation and the book is limited to 1,000 copies so it would be advisable to order early.

## GALLERY

# Georgi Konstantinovich Zhukov

DAVID COWARD Paintings by RICHARD HOOK

ON SUNDAY evenings at eight since 21 November Channel 4 has been showing the major new series *The Great Commanders*. It examines the nature of leadership, looking at some of the greatest military commanders in history. The programmes were Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Nelson, Grant and Zhukov (26 December). In this last of four articles, David Coward explains some of the factors in the early life of Zhukov that led to his becoming a great commander.

THERE ARE FEW great commanders whose success is due solely to their own virtues. Alexander inherited a strong, martial kingdom from his father; Napoleon and Grant secured coveted positions at elite military schools through family influence. All Zhukov had was natural ability backed by determination and hard work.

Georgi Konstantinovich Zhukov was born in a small village southwest of Moscow on 2 December 1896. His father's only education was his three-year apprenticeship to a shoemaker. His mother was a tough farm labourer, able to carry a 180lb load a considerable distance. Often living on bread and water, living in a shed when their ramshackle one-room house collapsed, the young Zhukov had none of the advantages of birth that had given the careers of other military commanders an early boost. He did well at school, but as his father could barely afford the fees the boy was soon apprenticed to his uncle, a Moscow furrier.

Uncle Sergei felt no sentiment about his young relative. Georgi was beaten and ruthlessly exploited. But he was determined to succeed. After each exhausting working day he continued his studies by candlelight on his bunk. In four years he became a craftsman, and in 1913 gained entry to Moscow City Academy.

Had it not been for the First World War Zhukov might have become a comfortable petty-bourgeois tradesman. He showed no patriotic desire to volunteer for the front. Called up in 1915, the 19-year-old was happy enough to find that he had been selected for the cavalry, not the infantry.

Preliminary training was grim and boring, with beatings given out for mistakes in drill and often only cold slops to eat. But, like many of the other conscripts, Zhukov was used to such conditions.

In September he was assigned to the dragons and cavalry training began. 'Hardest of all was the horsemanship and the use of sabre and lance. Many of us had blisters drawing blood, but complaints were forbidden.' As a Moscow 'bookworm', Zhukov was singled out for bullying by a particularly vicious NCO. Helped by his friends, Zhukov ambushed him in a dark corner, threw a blanket over his head, and beat him unconscious. Had a sympathetic platoon commander not hushed the matter up and transferred the NCO, Zhukov's military career would have ended in court martial. Instead he was selected for NCO training.

NCOs were the backbone of the Tsarist army. Candidates were handpicked and given thorough combat instruction. Penalties were inflicted for the smallest fault. But the trained NCO was trusted and left to get on with it by his officers, producing responsible, independent and determined leaders able to act upon their own initiative. Later Zhukov would reflect upon his training: 'The future NCO was not taught the human approach. He was expected to mould the soldier into a pliant robot. Discipline was maintained by harshness. Though regulations did not stipulate corporal punishment, it was rather common.'

Physically and morally humiliated, Zhukov and his comrades learnt to treat their subordinates as they themselves had been treated. Zhukov passed out an NCO candidate. 'The graduate was a good horseman adept in the use of weapons and a good drill master. No wonder after the Great October Revolution many NCOs of the old army rose to prominence as commanders.' In Zhukov's later career in the Red Army his ruthlessness, intolerance of failure and peevish insistence on the very highest standards were very much the legacy of the old-fashioned Tsarist NCO.

In August 1916 Zhukov joined the 10th Cavalry Division in the Ukraine. His unit was the 10th Dragoon 'Novgorod' Regiment based

Georgi Konstantinovich Zhukov at the end of his NCO training in 1916. He wears the double-breasted shinel 'greatcoat' of coarse grey-brown wool: the type issued to mounted personnel worn down to below the calves. The collar patches and shoulder straps are in the regimental colour of raspberry red piped white. (John Preston Chaney)





near Kharkov. From casualties on hospital trains he learnt of the low morale at the front: 'Most generals and officers enjoyed no prestige among the soldiers... but there were among the lower ranking officers many who were close in sentiment and spirit to their subordinates. Such men were liked, trusted and followed through thick and thin.' Later on Zhukov would hound all ineffectual or irresolute officers he found under his command.

Soon his baptism of fire came when his squadron was bombed, killing a soldier and five horses. His division moved to the Dniester River, where the wooded ground was unsuited to cavalry attacks. It fought mainly as infantry. The unit suffered heavy losses, and the offensive fizzled out. Zhukov distinguished himself, capturing a German officer, but on 16 October suffered concussion when thrown from his horse by an exploding mine. He was sent back to Kharkov to recover, and was twice decorated with the Cross of Saint George for his exploits.

Promoted to NCO, Zhukov was delighted to finally return to his squadron and his friends. Few desired battle and the talk was of an end to the war. In February 1917 his squadron was confronted by demonstrators with Red Banners. The soldiers joined them. Many offi-

cers were soon arrested by a Bolshevik Soldier's Committee and the troops ordered back to base.

Zhukov, who had been secretly petitioning his subordinates for their support of the Bolshevik cause, was unanimously elected chairman of his squadron soldier's committee and joined his platoon commander as a delegate on the regimental soviet. In March 1917 the soldiers voted to support the Bolsheviks, not Kerensky's Provisional Government. In May they were discharged from the army, but told to keep their arms and ammunition. Zhukov, hunted by officers of his old regiment who had sided with Ukrainian Nationalists, went into hiding and did not return to his village until November 1917.

The war against Germany ended with a negotiated peace. Within Russia there was Civil War. Zhukov's plans to join the Red Guards were thwarted when he fell desperately ill with typhus, but by August 1918 he had recovered enough to join the volunteer Red Army and Budenny's 1st Moscow Cavalry Division. He was posted to the 4th Cavalry Regiment, commanded by a former sergeant. Membership of this elite cavalry clique, much admired by Stalin for its exploits in the Civil War, would later boost Zhukov's military career, as would his early election to

Communist Party membership.

White counter-revolutionary forces numbered a million well trained and equipped Russians supported by European interventionist troops. Zhukov was wounded by a hand grenade in fierce hand-to-hand fighting and taken out of combat. He was assigned to a reserve battalion, then in January 1920 to a Red Commanders' Course for those who had distinguished themselves in battle. On the course he was both student and weapons instructor. Training ended when the trainers were rushed to Moscow, bundled into an *ad hoc* regiment, and sent hurriedly to the Caucasus to fight the Whites.

Zhukov was sent to the 14th Separate Cavalry Brigade, where he became a platoon commander in the 1st Cavalry Regiment. His men made fun of the red trousers their new officer had been issued as a military trainee, but after he led them against bands of Whites on the coast, killing and capturing the enemy without loss, the red trousers were not mentioned again. By December 1920 he was commanding the regiment's Second Squadron.

Practical combat experience and growing tactical expertise gained in the Civil War formed the base of Zhukov's military

*The battle of Khalkhin Gol, 20-31 August 1939 (after Soviet Military Review).*

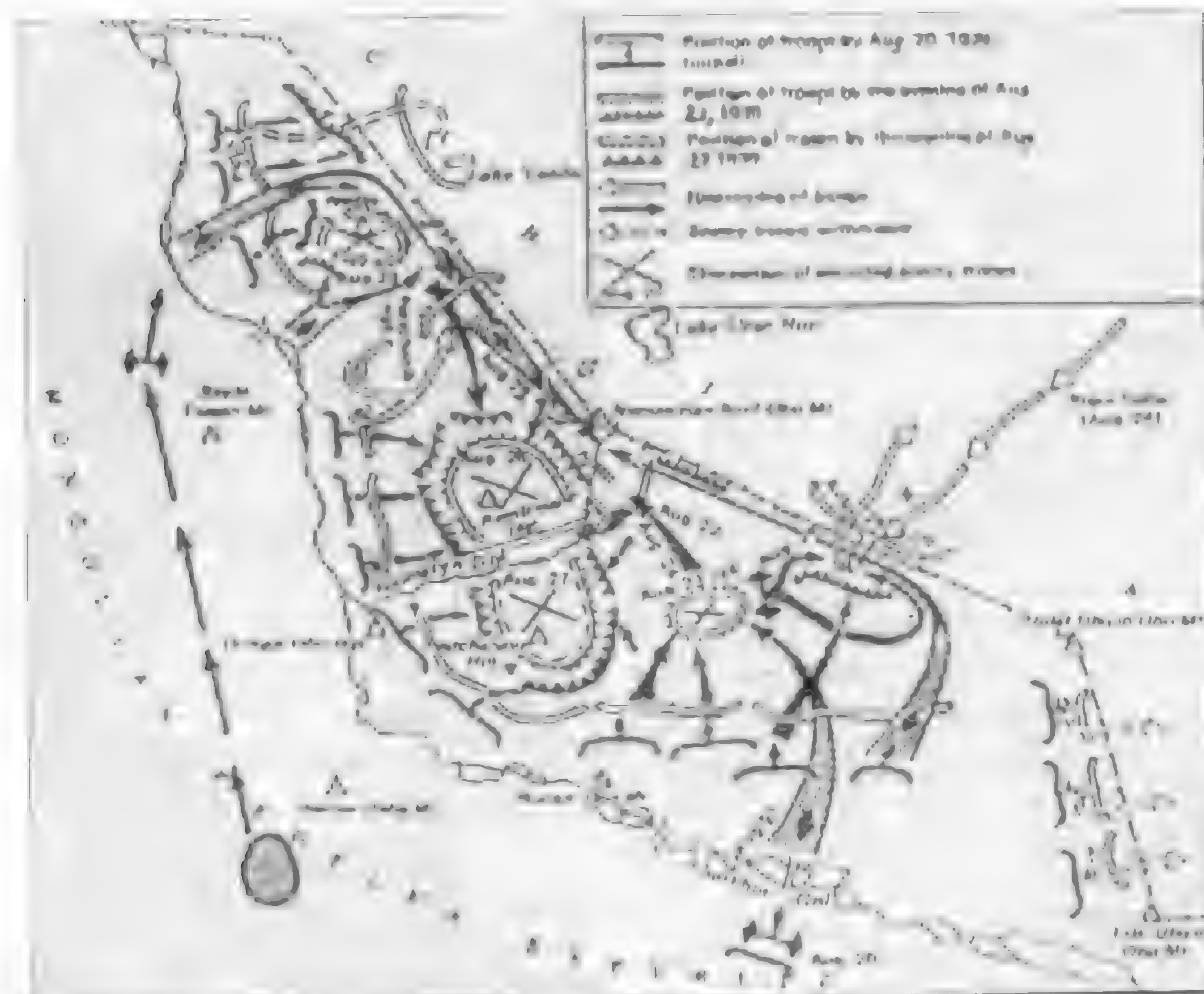
education and earned him recognition and promotion. Assigned with the 1st Cavalry Regiment to eliminate guerrilla bands in Tambov province, Zhukov led his squadron in many fierce engagements. The guerrillas had machine-guns and artillery, forming mobile armies that often outnumbered the Soviet forces. On one occasion, pinned down by a dead horse in a mêlée, Zhukov's life was saved by his political commissar who sabred his attacker and pulled Zhukov away to safety.

In March 1921 Zhukov's squadron formed a rearguard, holding off a superior force of enemy for several hours with its four machine-guns and 70mm gun. As the squadron moved back in a fighting withdrawal, the dead and wounded were taken with them so they could not be mutilated by the enemy. Often the fighting became hand-to-hand. Zhukov had two horses killed under him. When his careful use of fire had sufficiently reduced the enemy numbers, Zhukov led a counter-attack which broke them. He received the Order of the Red Banner.

At the end of the Civil War Zhukov remained in the army as a squadron commander. The Red Army was impoverished, equipped with the leftovers of the old army; it had no modern equipment at all. In May 1924 Zhukov was appointed Commander of the 19th 'Buzuluk' Cavalry Regiment. But despite his combat experience he had not completed any military course since becoming an officer, and felt behind in what he should know as a Regimental Commander.

Zhukov prepared his poorly trained command for the first proper manoeuvres since 1914. Although working a 12-hour day, the 26-year-old commander made up for his lack of education by a further four hours of zealous private study. With many other Red Army commanders elevated from the ranks during the Civil War, his dedication was by no means unique. Zhukov soon passed examinations to attend the Higher Cavalry School in Leningrad.

Zhukov was establishing himself as a capable commander and — just as importantly — a loyal communist. He demanded and received the highest standards. He excelled on manoeuvres and in the imprudent tactical exercises initiated by inspecting generals. He was the first regimental commander in his division to





be trusted without a commissar. In common with many others at the time he donated personal valuables — his wife's jewellery and the silver prizes he had won for horsemanship — to help finance industrialisation. Zhukov was outspoken in his criticism of failings in the Red Army, but this cannot have done him any harm, as he was about to be selected for a great honour.

The Red Army had been committed to modernisation from its inception, but only by the late 'twenties was Soviet industry able to supply new equipment. They had just begun to experiment with tank regiments — one per cavalry division — and Zhukov's regiment was one of two selected by Stalin to experiment with the new weapons. Stalin liked to get involved with the details of government, especially in personnel selection. Zhukov's outstanding record and membership of the cavalry clique may have secured him Stalin's patronage. Now under the direct eye of the Kremlin, he would have to prove he deserved it.

Zhukov's patient and determined leadership became widely admired: 'He observed, learned and taught others. He did this with a rare patience and self control and exacted fulfilment of his duty in a persistent, methodical and well thought out manner. No one ever saw him lose his temper or burst into a rage. This had tremendous educational value for his subordinates. But if admonitions did not help, then he could, without the slightest hesitation, turn someone over for court martial.' He demanded the highest standards, paying an almost pedantic attention to detail, but asked no more than he asked for himself.

There was no aspect of soldiering, from mastering new technology to seeing that routine tasks were properly done, that he considered to be beneath him. Inspecting the regimental guard, Zhukov saw one soldier with badly polished boots. After castigating the officer in charge, he called for polish and brushes, knelt down and polished one of the boots until it shone, telling the astonished soldier to clean the other to the same standard. To his men he was a *polvodets* — a real commander. To inefficient officers who fell below his standards he was an object of fear. With the 39th Regiment taking on the challenge of mechanisation with efficiency and flair, soon *Pravda* started to devote

spreads to it and its commander.

Zhukov was selected for the Advanced Course for Senior Officers at the Frunze Academy in Moscow. By May 1930 he started up the ladder of promotion again. Appointed Assistant Cavalry Inspector of the Red Army, he rose to command of the 4th Cavalry Division by March 1933. As distinguished a Divisional Commander as he had been a Regimental Commander, in 1936 Zhukov and his division received the Order of Lenin. This was despite his outspoken criticism of the Red Army's 1935 manoeuvres, when he argued the need to concentrate armour on the battlefield. But Stalin would eventually be persuaded that the large tank units had to be disbanded. Zhukov's views would be vindicated when the Red Army faced disaster in 1941, but that was still a long time away.

In autumn 1936 he was sent to Spain as one of the principal military observers, appearing on a newsreel in early summer 1937 addressing volunteers of the International Brigade. In Spain the Soviets tested the tank in fast moving combat operations. The results could have been decisive, as the T-26 tank supplied by Russia was superior to Nationalist equipment. But many Republican armoured attacks were costly defeats because of poor tactics or unwise experimentation — Zhukov's role in these fiascos is unknown but he would certainly have learned from them. The experience did his career no damage. He returned to the Soviet Union to become a corps commander.

The *chistki* — Stalin's purges that murdered more colonels and generals than would be killed in the Great Patriotic War — passed Zhukov by. Sent to China to observe Japanese strategy and tactics, he saw how the Soviet far eastern forces were weakened by purges, reorganisation and extended supply lines. Since 1936 the Japanese, through a series of careful border clashes from their conquests in Manchuria, had been probing the strength of the Red Army. In 1938 he returned to the Soviet Union and became Deputy Commander of the Byelorussian Military District. A member of the cavalry clique, risen from the ranks, wounded and decorated in the Civil War, unafraid to speak his mind, Zhukov was in a small group of officers especially respected by Stalin.



*Zhukov's thorough preparation and ruthless determination would play a key role in the destruction of the invading German forces, as examined in the final episode of the Channel 4 series The Great Commanders.*

Nevertheless, Zhukov's daughters remember that from then until after the war his bags were always packed in case of arrest.

In the east, Japanese provocation continued. In 1939, claiming a border incursion by Mongolian horsemen, the Japanese planned to seize territory east of the Khalkhin-Gol river. They attacked on 29 May 1939 but were repulsed.

Zhukov was summoned to Moscow and flown immediately to Mongolia, arriving in June 1939. By July the Japanese had massed a threefold superiority in manpower, and launched an offensive aimed to surround and destroy the Soviet/Mongolian forces. Zhukov's superior armour halted them at the river, with only the Japanese flanks able to cross and occupy hills on the Soviet bank. Their advance threatened to encircle the Soviets until Zhukov counter-attacked. The Japanese tried to retreat, but their single pontoon bridge across the river had been destroyed and many Japanese soldiers died as they tried to swim to safety.

The Japanese prepared for their next offensive. As *Komkor*, Corps Commander of all Soviet and Mongolian

forces, Zhukov demanded massive reinforcement of his outnumbered forces. Supplies and reinforcements were carried over a 400-mile dirt road and the Soviets built up a slight superiority in manpower, artillery and air power and a massive 4-1 superiority in tanks. The prestige of the Soviet Union was at stake, as was Zhukov's career.

Learning that the Japanese planned their new offensive for 24 August, Zhukov planned a co-ordinated surprise pre-emptive assault. The Japanese would be confused by a deception plan — *maskirovka* — on a huge scale. His aim was to persuade the enemy that his plan was purely defensive. There were false reports of fortifications, faked noises of troops digging in, and the distribution of bogus handbooks titled 'What the Soviet Soldier Must Know in the Defence'. All movement was at night. The noise of concentrating armour was disguised by lorries driving without silencers, bombing raids and incessant machine-gun fire.

Zhukov's offensive came four days before the Japanese had planned theirs, taking them completely by surprise. It was a quiet and warm Sunday; convinced their enemy was not even thinking of an offensive, many Japanese senior officers were away on leave. After a massive barrage, southern, northern and central groups of forces advanced. Zhukov's guiding principle was *pryod* —

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forward — ruthlessly and impatiently replacing commanders who could not maintain the costly momentum of the offensive. The vicious slog finally broke through the Japanese lines on 23 August. The Japanese were encircled. Singlemindedly Zhukov began to reduce them with a series of attacks. In their hasty plan of defence the Japanese expected the muddy and uncrossable river to protect their flank. Zhukov ordered his engineers to secretly strengthen the river bed by night, then demoralised the Japanese with an attack from this unexpected direction. By the morning of 31 August the People's Republic of Mongolia was clear of invaders.

Thousands of Soviet troops died. Zhukov was not a cruel man but was used to hardship and saw casualties as an inevitable consequence of war: 'I made the decision to attack the Japanese with Yakovlev's tank regiment. I knew that without infantry support it would suffer terrible losses, but we deliberately went for it... we were prepared for this.' Faced with a battle that had to be won, he had the ruthlessness to do what was necessary.

Zhukov, decorated Hero of the Soviet Union, was the man behind the victory which effectively dissuaded the Japanese from any further incursions into the Soviet sphere of influence. Rigid in demanding massive reinforcement and obedient execution of his orders, precise in his timing of the attack, he retained the drive, tactical flexibility and innovation to achieve his aim by any means, regardless of casualties. These methods would characterise his battles in the coming war with Germany. On his return Zhukov was interviewed by Stalin and appointed to a military district in the Soviet Union. In the west the first stage of the Second World War, the Phoney War, had begun, but it would not remain passive for long. **MI**

Zhukov's rise to become Stalin's deputy is featured in Episode Six of *The Great Commanders*, 'Georgi Konstantinovich Zhukov and the Battle of Berlin', on Channel 4 on Boxing Day at 8pm. Using computer graphics and new material from the Russian Federation, the programme will look at Zhukov's qualities as a commander, centering on the Battle of Berlin. A book to accompany the series, written by Phil Grabsky and with an introduction by series consultant David Chandler, has been published by Boxtree, price £15.99 (see reviews).

**Richard Hook's reconstruction on the back cover show: Top left: Mladshi Unterofficier (Junior Sergeant) G.K. Zhukov, 10th 'Novgorod' Dragoon Regiment, 1917. At the beginning of World War I the regimental distinction stencilled on to the khaki shoulder boards was the crowned monogram of the King of Wurttemberg; on 14 August 1914 this was changed to a politically correct figure '10'. Dragoons were trained and equipped with the lance but here Zhukov is armed only with the shashka and 7.62mm carbine M1891. Ammunition is carried in a leather pouch and 30-round bandolier worn cossack-fashion. Unlike the cossacks, the rest of the Imperial Russian cavalry wore spurs. The award of two St. George's Crosses is mentioned in the text.**

**Top centre: Starshina (Sergeant Major) G.K. Zhukov, Red Commanders' Course, Moscow, 1920. The uniform of commanders and soldiers was alike in the early Red Army. All Tsarist distinctions in title and uniform were abolished. Zhukov's uniform has the cavalry arm of service colour and junior commander's rank badges introduced in 1919. As a military trainee he wears red trousers. The cavalry branch badge on the left arm was introduced on 3 April 1920; front line troops would have waited considerably longer before receiving theirs.**

**Bottom left: Komandir Polka (Regimental Commander) G.K. Zhukov, 1924. From a photograph, he wears the 'Budionovka' cap or shlem, named after Budenny. It carries a star in cavalry blue with the black piping added in the early 1920s. The branch colour also appears on the greatcoat. Although the Red Army was barely six years old, Zhukov's rank badges show the second change, when they were moved to the collar after an order of 20 June 1924. Above them is the cavalry collar badge introduced on 31 January 1922. Bottom right: Komkor (Corps Commander) G.K. Zhukov, Khalkhin Gol, 1939. Again based on a photograph, which shows a column of T-26 tanks led by a command variant. On 3 December 1935 gold piping on the collar patches and new arm chevrons were introduced for officers, together with a red cap band for Supreme Commanders. Zhukov wears the Order of Lenin, Order of the Red Banner and Red Army 20th Anniversary medal. Despite his rank and decorations, his uniform is much the same as in 1917.**



# Sandwell Skirmish

AMONGST THE MOST popular re-enactment, figure modelling and wargaming events after only two years is the 'Sandwell Skirmish'. Report from 'MI' staff.

HUNDREDS OF MILITARY history enthusiasts descended on West Bromwich last weekend for Sandwell's second annual wargames convention.

Sandwell Skirmish '93 was held at the Gala Leisure Centre and attracted visitors from as far afield as Devon and North Yorkshire.

Alongside the tabletop battles, fought with thousands of miniature soldiers, were re-enactment groups such as the Sealed Knot, the 7th Virginia Cavalry and the 14th Roman Legion. The Company of the

White Boar who re-enact the War of the Roses performed music and song from the time of Richard III and won the best re-enactment group trophy for the second year running. They will be returning next year in the hope of a hat-trick.

Stourbridge and District Wargamers retained their best participation game trophy, this time with Godzilla versus the Monsters! (A shame to see serious wargamers putting up with this... it does nothing to enhance the hobby's reputation.) Best demonstration game trophy went to the Victorian Military Society who presented

George Bailey (left) and John Harris re-live the American Revolution at West Bromwich's Gala Leisure Centre. The two redcoats are members of the 37th Regiment of Foot, one of the re-enactment groups to add colour and spectacle to last year's Sandwell Skirmish.

'Who goeth there?' Sealed Knot musketeers Pat Lovatt (left) and Nick Hodson perform sentry duty at Sandwell Skirmish. The two 'Royalists' are members of Colonel Richard Batot's Regiment of Foote.



the Retreat from Kabul, much more a subject for 'MI' readers. A number of wargames enthusiasts have already expressed an interest in the proposed Ancients/Mediaeval competition using the now *Dr Bellis Multiturnis* rules.

BBC Radio WM invited a delegation from Sandwell Skirmish onto their pre-match programme live from the Hawthorns. Football fans arriving early were bemused by the sight of a 15th Century armoured man-at-arms and a red-coated infantryman from

the American Revolution!

Len Johnson from Ironhoops also donated a special trophy for the best-painted wargames figures — won by the Company Ecorcheur for their Wars of the Roses miniatures.

Sandwell Skirmish '94 is scheduled for Sunday, 20 November. For further information contact Tom Penn (wargames) on 021 745 3711; Dave Whitehouse (re-enactments) on 021 569 3876 or John Hammond (trade) on 0509 213789. **MI**

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# Georgi Zhukov

1917



1920



1939



1924



See article on page 37